

STARS AND STRIPES.®

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Free to Deployed Areas



ISRAEL HITS GAZA SHELTER

Shelling strikes facility
housing UN school, civilians
fleeing conflict **Page 12**

LEFTERIS PITARAKIS/AP

A young Palestinian man carries a child into the emergency room of the Kamal Adwan hospital in Beit Lahiya on Thursday after Israeli tank shells hit a compound housing a U.N. school in Beit Hanoun, in the northern Gaza Strip. The attack killed more than a dozen people and wounded scores more who were seeking shelter from fierce clashes.



Lawmakers spar over funding for VA reform bill

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Congressional negotiations on reforming the Department of Veterans Affairs were on the verge of collapse

Thursday as leaders in the House and Senate clashed over spending.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., claimed the other lead negotiator in the effort to hammer out a compromise reform bill, Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., is not working in good faith and

pulled a "take-it-or-leave-it gambit" by calling a meeting of lawmakers Thursday without consulting Sanders.

Miller, the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, said Sanders was pressing to add billions

in spending requested last week by interim VA secretary Sloan Gibson.

Gibson got legislators' attention July 16 when he said the VA will need an extra \$17.6 billion in funding between now and 2017.

SEE REFORM ON PAGE 2

NAVY

Blue Angels undergo leadership shake-up in wake of scandal

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ARMY

Of 1,100 captains pink-slipped, 48 were in Afghanistan

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MIDEAST

Afghan vote recount delayed by dispute over ballot fraud

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Chamberlain's arm – and beard – fitting in with Tigers » Back page

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"This man conducted a horrific murder and you guys are going, let's worry about the drugs. Why didn't they give him a bullet, why didn't we give him Drano?"

—Richard Brown, whose family member was killed by Joseph Rudolph Wood. Wood's Arizona execution took nearly two hours, rekindling a national debate.

See story on Page 10

TOP CLICKS ON STRIPES.COM

The most popular stories on our website:

1. Army: Of 1,100 captains pink-slipped, 48 were in Afghanistan
2. Senator: I had PTSD when I wrote War College thesis that had apparent plagiarism
3. Germans withholding evidence in AFN murder case pending death penalty decision
4. DOD to provide space for 5,000 more migrant children until next year
5. Study: Military a refuge for those exposed to childhood abuse

COMING SOON

Science & Medicine

Most don't like being alone with their thoughts



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MILITARY

Reform: VA funding request hampered by partisan sparring

FROM FRONT PAGE

The proposal, developed with the White House Office of Management and Budget, would address the causes of the scandal that has exploded in recent months over long wait times for medical care and fraudulent scheduling practices used to conceal delays.

"These funds address only the current shortfalls in clinical staff, space, information technology and purchase care necessary to provide timely, high quality care," he said.

Miller and Sanders are leading a conference committee that has so far failed to reach an agreement this month on merging bills passed in both chambers of Congress calling for reforms such as increasing medical staff, providing more access to private care, and firing VA employees who commit wrongdoing.

"At this point, I can only conclude with great reluctance that the good faith we have shown has simply not been reciprocated by the other side," Sanders said Thursday on the Senate floor.

Miller said Sanders had declined meetings Wednesday and Thursday.

Miller added that his proposal would provide \$10 billion in emergency funds to be used at any time, and an additional \$102 million this year that would mostly be used on providing outside private care, but insisted that all other requested money must go through the normal appropriations process, including a White House request.

Gibson testified again Thursday in front of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

In the wake of the Phoenix VA scandal—where veterans' names were kept on secret wait lists for care—the inspector general issued an interim report laying out the problems.

Correction

A July 24 story about Germany withholding evidence in the strangulation death of an AFN broadcaster misstated the rank of the 3rd Air Force commander. He is Lt. Gen. Darryl L. Robertson.



Veterans Affairs Secretary nominee Bob McDonald of Ohio is flanked by Sens. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, left, and Rob Portman, Ohio, right, ahead of a Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearings to examine his nomination Tuesday.

Senate panel poised to confirm McDonald

The vote to confirm Bob McDonald as the next secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs was set for Thursday afternoon, according to Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla.

McDonald got a warm reception from lawmakers on both

sides of the aisle Tuesday during an initial confirmation hearing before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

On Wednesday morning, committee members voted 14-0 to send the nomination to the full chamber.

McDonald, a West Point graduate who rose to captain in the 101st Airborne Division before

rising to chief executive officer of consumer products giant Procter & Gamble Co., would follow Erik Shinseki, who stepped down in May amid reports of record manipulation and falsification and such long wait times that some veterans died waiting for care, though it's not clear the delays caused their deaths.

From staff reports

McDonald, the sides debated whether to give the department more money to fix its problems or look for outside remedies.

While both sides agreed that McDonald is the man for the job—the Senate panel forwarded his nomination on a 14-0 vote—Democrats argued that Congress should fund the VA fully, while some Republicans cautioned that more money would not solve the department's problems.

Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., said he worried that Congress would not provide McDonald with the tools he needs.

"You cannot hire people with-

out paying them," he said. "You cannot build stuff without paying for it."

Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., suggested veterans should be able to seek care from private doctors, an idea being considered in legislation that would pay for patients who live a great distance from a VA site or who are on a long waiting list to do so.

"I can't believe that just throwing more money at the VA is the answer," he said. "I personally believe that the VA needs competition."

Stars and Stripes editor Patrick Dickson contributed to this report. tritten.travis@stripes.com
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MIDEAST

What constitutes a fraudulent ballot?

Afghan vote recount delayed as officials try to determine criteria to throw out suspicious ballots

By ERIN CUNNINGHAM
The Washington Post

KABUL, Afghanistan — Election authorities on Wednesday halted the inspection of about 8 million ballots cast in last month's presidential runoff in Afghanistan, heightening concerns that an already chaotic process to choose the country's new leader could take months to complete.

The effort to re-examine the votes was paused for a full day to hammer out differences between the two candidates over what criteria to use to scrap suspicious ballots, a spokesman for the Independent Election Commission said.

The audit, which began last week, was expected to resume Thursday.

Tensions have risen high since the June 15 election, in which former foreign minister Abdullah Abdullah faced off against former World Bank executive Ashraf Ghani after a first round of voting in April in which neither secured the majority needed to win the presidency.

According to preliminary results released by the IEC, Ghani won 56 percent of the vote. Abdullah accused election officials of rigging the vote in favor of Ghani and announced that he was boycotting the IEC. The impasse endangered Afghanistan's first democratic transfer of power ahead of a scheduled pullout of foreign troops by the end of this year.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry then flew to Kabul to stave off a full-blown political crisis, but he clinched an 11-hour deal that included a nationwide review of ballots.

The audit has had a fitful start, marked

If a voter had signed his or her name next to the candidate's picture, in lieu of the required check mark, and if the signature was legible, the ballot was deemed fraudulent. But if the IEC staff could read the signature, the ballot apparently stayed in. The logic was that a voter could have intended the indecipherable scribble to be a check mark. A legible signature was a deliberate spoiling of the ballot.

by fundamental disagreements over what constitutes an invalid vote and which officials make the final decision to discard faulty ballots. Those differences, which emerged before the audit began, came to a head Wednesday after a week of messy recounting.

At the commission's compound Monday — where all the votes are being audited in large, dark hangars ringed by cement blast walls and barbed wire — the confusion among IEC staffers was clear.

Representatives of the rival campaigns posed over ballots they suspected of being fraudulent, but with no pre-established criteria, decisions — some of them confusing and counterintuitive — were made on an ad hoc basis.

For example, if a voter had signed his or her name next to the candidate's picture, in lieu of the required check mark, and if the signature was legible, the ballot was deemed fraudulent, international observers there said. But if none of the IEC staff could read the signature, the ballot apparently

stayed in. The logic was that a voter could have intended the indecipherable scribble to be a check mark. A legible signature was a deliberate spoiling of the ballot, observers explained.

In another case, during the audit of a box from the Koshanda district of the northern province of Balkh, IEC staffers under the supervision of a U.N. monitor decided that if voters had written any number from one to nine next to a particular candidate's name on the ballot, the vote would be counted. But double digits indicated fraud. It was unclear why such a decision was made — and it did not appear that IEC officials at other auditing stations were using that benchmark.

The voting in Koshanda district was clearly dubious, international observers said.

"It's problematic," Gregory Minjack, a senior adviser with U.S.-based Democracy International's mission in Afghanistan, said as he observed the audit.

"We haven't seen anything crazy yet — ghost boxes, the stuff of lore," he said,

referring to reports of ballots that were never dispatched to districts but were simply marked by officials in provincial capitals. NATO-led troops are still transporting ballots from some of the country's most isolated provinces to the capital.

Once the audit moves on to the eastern and southern regions, where observers anticipate high levels of fraud, "then it's going to be a problem," Minjack said. "Then we're looking at probably one box per day per station."

Right now 41 teams made up of two IEC auditors — and supplemented by U.N. observers and representatives of each candidate — are auditing an average of six boxes per day, headquarters staff said. More than 23,000 boxes need to be inspected, and as of Monday, just 700 boxes had been completed, a representative from Abdullah's campaign said.

U.S. and U.N. officials had hoped to finish the audit before September.

The presidential inauguration was originally scheduled for Aug. 2, but it has been postponed indefinitely to allow for the recount.

The United States and the international community are worried that prolonging the deadlock could destabilize the country further. As the crisis deepened earlier this month and Abdullah cried foul, his powerful, armed backers threatened to declare a "parallel government."

Afghanistan currently is governed under a highly centralized presidential system. Splitting executive responsibilities will ensure a more even distribution of power and help thwart political and ethnic conflict, U.N. officials said.

Afghan officer sentenced to die for killing photographer

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A Kabul court announced Wednesday that the Afghan police officer charged with killing Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhaus and wounding veteran AP correspondent Kathy Gannon has been convicted and sentenced to death.

It was the first court hearing in the case and, under Afghan law, the verdict and sentence are subject to several stages of review.

Six judges at the Kabul District Court found former Afghan police unit commander Naqibullah guilty of murder and treason over the attack in the southeastern city of Khost that targeted the international journalists as they prepared to cover the first round of the country's presidential election. The judges also sentenced Naqibullah, who like many other Afghans goes by one name, to four years in prison for shooting and wounding Gannon in the attack.

The judges ruled Tuesday during a two-hour hearing that followed a three-month police investigation.

Naqibullah, represented by a defense lawyer provided to him by a legal association, argued

with the judges before his sentencing, saying at one point that he was "not a normal person." However, judges dismissed his claim after he provided his name, age and the correct date. Naqibullah also denied judges' claims that he once traveled to Pakistan to be trained by extremists, saying he only received medical care while there.

Afghanistan's president must sign off on any execution order. Naqibullah also may appeal within 15 days to a second court and then ultimately to the country's Supreme Court. Gannon and Niedringhaus traveled to Khost under the protection of Afghan forces and were at a district police headquarters in a village outside the city on April 4 when witnesses say Naqibullah walked up to their hired car, yelled "Allahu Akbar" — "God is Great" — and fired on them in the backseat with a Kalashnikov assault rifle. He surrendered immediately after the attack.

Witness and official accounts have suggested the shooting was not planned. While in court Tuesday, Naqibullah did not offer a reason why he opened fire.

Niedringhaus, a 48-year-old award-winning photographer who had covered conflict zones from



Kathy Gannon, left, Associated Press special correspondent for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and AP photographer Anja Niedringhaus are shown in Afghanistan in 2012.

the Balkans in the 1990s to Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan, died instantly of her wounds. Gannon, a 61-year-old senior correspondent for Afghanistan and Pakistan, suffered three gunshot wounds in the attack. She is still recovering from her injuries.

The two had worked together repeatedly in Afghanistan since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion, covering the conflict from some of the most dangerous hot spots of the Taliban insurgency while focusing on the effect war had on civilians.

Car bombing at market in Afghanistan leaves 6 dead

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A bombing in a market in northern Afghanistan killed six people, including a young girl, Thursday while a separate attack in the east killed a local police commander and his bodyguard, officials said.

The attack in the market was aimed at a police car but the police escaped unharmed, said Sonatullah Timor, the spokesman for the Takhar provincial government. The bomb, which was placed on a motorcycle, wounded 26 people, including children, he said.

It was not immediately clear who carried out the attack, but Taliban insurgents frequently target the country's security forces.

In a separate incident, a suicide bomber detonated his explosive at a checkpoint in the eastern Nangarhar province, killing a local police commander and his bodyguard, according to police spokesman Hazrat Hussain Mashraiqwal. He said the bomber shook hands with the commander before the explosion. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack in a media statement.

MILITARY

Report: No Agent Orange is in barrels

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND CHYOMI SUMIDA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — There is no evidence that dozens of empty chemical drums unearthed last year on former U.S. military property contained the toxic defoliant Agent Orange, according to a Japanese government report.

The Okinawa Defense Bureau of the Ministry of Defense tested the final 61 of 83 barrels that were unearthed from land adjacent to the Kadena Air Base fence line. While it found they contained ingredients used in Agent Orange, they were of incorrect consistency and quantities, leading officials to believe they were to be used as a common herbicide.

The Defense Bureau also reiterated that it was unlikely that the barrels were a health risk. Tests have shown the air and water, and off base, are safe.

"There is no evidence that the barrels contained Agent Orange," said the report posted on the Defense Bureau's website earlier this month. "The soil samples that found dioxins and herbicides were taken from immediately beneath the barrels. It is highly unlikely that the ground in the vicinity area is polluted with dioxins of higher levels."

"Also, the soil collected this time was taken from the depth that no human beings are directly exposed to. Therefore there is little possibility that the polluted soil has impact on surrounding environment."

U.S. Air Force officials said they were still analyzing the report but planned to comment on its findings and release an English



TRAVIS J. TRITTON/Stars and Stripes

Inside a plastic-draped tent in January, Japan Ministry of Defense workers examine a badly rusted drum unearthed from a soccer field near Kadena Air Base schools.

translation of its executive summary on Facebook and kadena.af.mil, according to an 18th Wing spokesman.

The barrels caused a stir when they were found buried under a soccer field on land reclaimed from Kadena. The field is separated from Kadena's Amelia Earhart International School and its playground by a raised expressway. The Bob Hope Primary School and the Kadena middle and high schools are nearby.

The U.S. military's position has been that Agent Orange, which defoliated jungles during the Vietnam War and has been blamed for a slew of health problems in veterans, was never stored, shipped through or used on Okinawa. A study commissioned by the Department of Defense has backed that assertion. The military did continue use of Agent Orange in the early 1970s.

Some veterans who served on Okinawa during the war have claimed they witnessed its use and burial on the island but have been unable to convince the Department of Veterans Affairs to approve medical claims for exposure.

Agent Orange was made up of two major components — the chemical compounds 2,4-D butyl ester and 2,4,5-T butyl ester, mixed at a 50-50 ratio, Japanese officials said.

Last year, Japanese officials found 2,4,5-T, in 22 barrels that were unearthed from the site. The report said 2,4-D was found in the subsequently exhumed 61 barrels.

However, that doesn't mean Agent Orange was found.

The two base ingredients are common pesticides and herbicides that were widely used around the world for decades, but they were not mixed with solvents that would indicate they were going to be used in Agent Orange, and they were free from markings indicating use in Agent Orange. In addition, there was much more 2,4,5-T than 2,4-D, which led Japanese officials to believe they were meant for something else, like an herbicide.

The report also indicated the barrels contained other pollutants such as the herbicide pentachlorophenol, gasoline or another fossil fuel, the insecticide DDT and polychlorinated biphenyl.

The depth of the barrels indicates they were most likely buried by the U.S. military after it took the area during World War II and before 1988, a year after the Japanese reclaimed the land.

Traces of dioxins were detected in water samples in the area where the barrels were found but at levels below environmental standards, the report said.

"Therefore, it is quite unlikely that the buried barrels have had an impact on the environment or created a health hazard," Okinawa City Mayor Sachio Kuwae at a news conference earlier this month.

Kuwae said deeper excavation is planned to ensure there was no further contamination.

Air Force officials have said base drinking water meets all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards; it comes from a commercial Japanese source not connected with the area groundwater.

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Petry is ready to be more than the soldier with Medal of Honor

By ADAM ASHTON
The (Tacoma, Wash.) News Tribune

After three years in uniform wearing the nation's highest military honor, Master Sgt. Leroy Petry is ready to set aside his medal for a little while.

He says it's time for him to build a life as a civilian, to be more than a soldier. He's happy to ease out of the nonstop commitments that come with being the second living veteran to receive the Medal of Honor for valor in Afghanistan.

"I don't only want to be known as Leroy Petry with the Medal of Honor," said Petry, 34, who's retiring from the Army next week.

But before he could go, the Army wanted to do something special for the 15-year veteran of Joint Base Lewis-McChord's elite 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. It threw him the party of his life on Wednesday, bringing together hundreds of friends and family members who wanted to toast the soldier.

They celebrated him as much for his willingness to represent the military as a Medal of Honor recipient as they did for the heroism he showed in a May 2008 battle. Petry lost his right hand hurling a live grenade away from his wounded teammates.

"Leroy Petry, before and after the medal, represents all that is good about the American soldier," said Adm. William McRaven, chief of the Defense Department's Special Operations Command.

"You have handled this glorious burden with grace and dignity that makes the medal shine even brighter," the admiral said.

Since President Barack Obama awarded him the medal at a July



Petry

2011 White House ceremony, Petry's life has been a whirlwind of events representing the Army in public and raising morale for soldiers of all ranks. He also is a liaison between the military and wounded Special Operations troops in the Northwest, advocating for patients in their recovery.

It's not unusual to check out Twitter and see soldiers bragging about meeting Petry, shaking his prosthetic hand and receiving his special challenge coins. He's known to unexpectedly show up at military events in Puget Sound, where he'll talk with youngsters and veterans.

"I have the ability to share this medal with a lot of people," he said. "I look it on myself to say yes to a lot of things."

Those moments can come in large venues, such as when he's asked to speak about the military to Fortune 500 companies. Starbucks Chief Executive Howard Schultz had a front-row seat at Petry's retirement.

But the medal also sneaks up on Petry in quieter times, such as when he's at the grocery store and someone wants to share a story with him.

Petry, who those times takes a moment to remember his days as a wide-eyed young soldier who never imagined even meeting a Medal of Honor recipient.

"I know how it would have impacted me and I try to give that back to them."

Petry now is looking forward to withdrawing somewhat from the public. He plans to spend more time with his family — wife Ashley and four children — and to go to college to earn a bachelor's degree in business management.

"I needed to spend time with my family, and I needed to spend some time on me," he said.

He expects to continue representing the Army from time to time. "I am leaving the military, but not for long," he told his guests Wednesday. "I will stay involved and it has been the greatest honor of my life."

Former Intruder pilot takes command of Naval Support Activity Naples

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes



STEVEN BEARDSLEY/Stars and Stripes

Capt. Douglas W. Carpenter, new commander of Naval Support Activity Naples, stands with his son while greeting attendees at a command-change ceremony at in Capodichino in Naples, Italy.

NAPLES, Italy — A former Intruder pilot from Virginia assumed command Thursday of the Navy base here, home to operational commands for Europe and Africa.

Capt. Douglas W. Carpenter, 45, becomes the 33rd commander of Naval Support Activity Naples since the base was established in 1952. He relieves Capt. Scott Gray, who has commanded since 2011 and who heads to Jacksonville, Fla., for his next assignment.

Rear Adm. Jack Scoby, head of the Navy command responsible for shore installations across Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia, welcomed Carpenter and lauded the achievements of Gray, whose

tenure coincided with a period of budget cuts, labor issues and new housing requirements.

"Until you sit on that seat, it's hard to describe the literally hundreds of diverse issues skipper Gray has had to deal with during his time here," Scoby said.

The most recent example was a near-strike by the union representing Italian base workers here, scheduled for Thursday but later postponed. The labor issue is one of the first facing Carpenter, and perhaps a fitting introduction to the challenges of the command.

Aside from his handling of issues on base, Gray is credited by many here for his equanimity last summer, when the senior flag officer forced Gray, his wife and four children out of their on-base villa

because of structural damage in the flag quarters and the admiral's desire to live on base. The March death of Lt. Cmdr. John Keith, a Navy chaplain and friend, was also difficult for the commander.

"For me, it has been a very personal journey," Gray said in remarks that were occasionally emotional.

His next assignment is chief of staff of the Navy command for shore installations in the U.S. Southwest.

Carpenter grew up in a Navy family and spent part of his youth in Rota, Spain. He began his career as an A-6E Intruder pilot before moving to the S-3B Viking, a surveillance and refueling aircraft. He has deployed aboard the carriers USS Harry S. Truman

and USS Enterprise for the Iraq War and led a detachment in South America supporting counter-narcotics operations. He is married and has a young son.

The NSA Naples command includes the main base in Capodichino, the support site in Grigignano, the home port of the USS Mount Whitney in Gaeta and the Navy recreational facility in Capri and Positano. It supports 60 Fleet ships and U.S. servicemen assigned to the NATO headquarters in nearby Lago Patria.

Gray wished his successor luck, and he appeared to suggest he would need it.

"This is the place that challenges the best of leaders," Gray said.

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MILITARY

3 key changes in funding bill

By TOM PHILPOTT

The Senate Appropriations Committee has approved a fiscal 2015 defense money bill that fully supports the Senate Armed Services Committee's earlier embrace of key military compensation curbs sought by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Both committees have rejected proposals to restructure Tricare dramatically by consolidating plan options and by raising fees.

They also reject a \$200 million hit to the annual subsidy for commissaries which could force some commissaries to cut hours of operation and a few even to close.

Senate appropriators have shaped a funding bill that supports the armed services committee on three significant compensation changes:

Pay Cap. A second straight cap of 1 percent on the annual military pay raise. A 1.8 percent increase is needed in January to keep pace with private sector wage growth.

BAH Cap. A dampening for three years of yearly increases to Basic Allowance for Housing which is paid to 1 million servicemembers living off base in the United States. The goal is to slow BAH adjustments until the allowances cover only 95 percent of local rental costs. Current BAH rates cover 100 percent of members' local rental costs at state-side assignments.

Coverage rates also cover average renter's insurance, but that would end, just as the Joint Chiefs propose, if the Senate defense bill becomes law.

Higher Drug Co-Pays. Pharmacy co-payments would be increased for beneficiaries who have prescriptions filled at retail outlets or choose to use brand name medicines instead of less costly generic drugs. That change largely would affect military retirees and their families.

The goal is to "fully incentivize" use of Tricare mail order and also generic drugs to save on program costs. By changing behavior, and also by collecting higher fees, the Department of Defense estimates it would save \$829 million in 2015.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates savings of \$4.4 billion over five years.

Prescriptions filled at base pharmacies would remain free. But the current \$17 co-pay at retail outlets for a 30-day supply of a brand name drug on the military formulary would jump to \$26 in January, and by \$2 more annually over seven years to reach \$40 by 2022 and then \$45 by 2024.

Beneficiaries now face a co-pay of \$44 to get nonformulary drugs at local pharmacies. Under the plan, nonformulary drugs could be obtained only through home delivery. The co-pay for a three-month supply of mail order pills would climb from \$43 to \$51 in January and increase annually thereafter to reach \$66 by 2017 and \$90 by 2024.

MILITARY UPDATE

Co-pays for brand name drugs on the formulary, if filled by mail, would double from \$13 to \$26 next year and increase by \$2 to \$4 annually to reach \$34 by 2019 and \$45 by 2024.

Generic drugs would continue to be available at no charge by mail order until 2019 when a co-pay would be set at \$9 for a 90-day supply. The current \$5 co-pay for generic drugs at retail would be increased by \$1 a year starting in 2015 and reach \$14 in 2024.

Tricare runs a pilot program that requires older beneficiaries to obtain drugs for chronic conditions, like high blood pressure, through home delivery for at least a year. That took effect last spring. The Senate bill would replace the temporary trial with a permanent requirement that all retirees and their family members, regardless of age, use mail order or base pharmacies for maintenance medications.

Over on the House side, the armed services committee in May rhetorically rejected most compensation curbs proposed. But other than restoring half of the \$200 million cut proposed for commissary operations, the House panel did not identify offsets in the budget that could be used to pay for a full military raise, to stop a planned rollback in housing allowance adjustments or to scuttle the administration push for higher pharmacy fees.

The Republican-led House committee did note in a news release that President Barack Obama would need "legislative relief" to make "his proposed compensation cuts." Until then he remains "legally bound to provide established benefits to the military community," it said.

Acknowledging it made no effort this year to find funds to thwart the proposed cuts, it added: "In light of Congress' consistent opposition to pre-

mature, ill-advised cuts to war fighters' pay and benefits, Chairman [Harold "Buck"] McKeon expects the President to find an alternate solution."

However, neither the White House nor the Senate Armed Services Committee plans to look for a different solution. The Joint Chiefs back curbs in compensation to be able to fund other readiness needs as defense budgets shrink.

When House-Senate conferees meet in the fall to iron out differences between defense bills, House conferees almost certainly will have to defer to the Senate's plan on compensation and drug co-pays.

House members will have succeeded in keeping fingerprints off cuts to military compensation going into November elections, but they most likely did not do anything to scuttle them.

Advocates for servicemembers and military retirees believe their last best hope to protect full BAH increases or to block higher pharmacy fees will be to find a senator to introduce a rollback amendment when the defense authorization bill comes up for full Senate vote this fall.

Finding more than \$1 billion in offsets to replace the savings anticipated from dampening BAH and boosting pharmacy fees still would be difficult.

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, Va. 20126, email milupdate@aol.com or Twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update.



Iraq War veteran Darin Welker holds one of his ducks at his home in West Lafayette, Ohio.

TRAVOR JONES, COSHOCTON (OHIO) TRIBUNE/AP

Vet's day in court delayed

The Associated Press

COSHOCTON, Ohio — An Army veteran who says his pet ducks help relieve his post-traumatic stress disorder is now hoping for a change in the Ohio village law that prohibits him from keeping the animals in his backyard.

Darin Welker, who served in the Army National Guard, was cited for violating a ban on keeping farm animals in West Lafayette, about 80 miles east of Columbus. He and his attorney said Wednesday that village officials are considering the possibility of a new law.

"The village is in agreement and willing to negotiate a new village ordinance for animal therapy," Welker's attorney, Robert Weir, said.

Village Council Member Ron Lusk would say only that the council and mayor are trying to work out a solution to the problem and that will include taking a

look at the ordinance to see if any changes are needed.

Lusk said he couldn't comment further because the case is still in court. But he said he and other village administration officials are military veterans and wouldn't do anything to slight other veterans.

Welker says his back was injured in the service and his 14 ducks provide physical and emotional therapy. He says they ease his depression.

A Coshocton Municipal Court hearing scheduled Wednesday on Welker's citation was continued for 60 days, and Weir said he hopes something can be worked out by then.

Welker had wanted to have his day in court, even after a Pennsylvania stranger paid his \$140 fine and court costs. He said he now hopes for a new ordinance that would let him keep his ducks.

"I think this shows that it's important to stand up and fight for what's right," Welker said.

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MILITARY

Army: 48 captains in Afghanistan pink-slipped

By CHRIS CARROLL

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Of the more than 1,100 Army captains notified last month their military careers would soon end, 87 were deployed worldwide and 48 were serving in Afghanistan at the time, Army officials said Wednesday.

The Army has been talking for months about the need to separate the captains as well as more than 500 majors this summer as part of the broad Army drawdown, but it's the first time details have emerged about the sobering business of delivering pink slips to troops in harm's way.

The separations have become an issue on Capitol Hill, with Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., question-

ing International Security Assistance Force commander Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford about it during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing last week.

"Obviously that has to have an effect on the morale of our officer corps," McCain said. "A serious blow, I would think."

Dunford, who was answering questions during a hearing on his nomination to become Marine Corps commandant, agreed.

"Absolutely, and probably more importantly, Senator, than to have the officer corps is the message it sends to young soldiers whose company commander is forced to redeploy as a result of a reduction in force," Dunford said.

Rep. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., is urging the Senate to act, having

learned of the situation only after the House had passed its defense spending bill.

Cotton, a former Army infantry officer with a tour each in Iraq and Afghanistan, wants senators to introduce an amendment that would deny funding of the distribution of pink slips in Afghanistan.

Cotton blamed the Obama administration.

"The men and women deployed overseas have left their homes and families to fight for our country," he said in a written statement. "It's deplorable the Obama administration would treat them this way."

According to Army officials who spoke Wednesday on the condition of anonymity, deployed

troops who receive separation notices return to the United States as quickly as possible. For staff officers, that can happen within days, while others who wield more authority, like company commanders, may need up to 30 days to wrap up their assignments and return.

The 500 to 550 majors will receive word of their impending separations in late July or early August, officials said. Further early retirement and officer selection boards could be announced for late this year and early next year, an Army official said. Those notified have nine months to transition out of the active-duty Army, and many are expected to continue in the Army Reserve.

Somewhere between 800 and

900 NCOs are likely to be selected for separation in 2015 as brigade combat teams are inactivated, another official said. About 500 were selected early this year.

The Army intends to shrink to an active-duty end strength of 510,000 troops this year and to fall to 490,000 in 2015, officials said. From there, end strength likely will fall by another 40,000 by 2019 as a result of declining military spending. If elected officials don't find a way to forestall automatic budget cuts known as sequestration scheduled to return in 2016, Army leaders say the active force will fall to 420,000.

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Veterans, YMCA help Chicago teens through 'war' times

By ANNIE SWEENEY

Chicago Tribune

With smoky barbecue scent filling the air and '80s hip-hop thumping from a speaker, two inner-city teens led their teams up and down the forest preserve field in a friendly, spirited game of pickup football.

Alex, 18 and wiry, weaved across the field, making athletic catches and striding into the end zone, but Sammy, 15 and a dedicated school athlete, later returned a punt to win the game. As he sprinted downfield, Sammy turned to the cheering sideline, his face breaking into a smile, reflecting the laid-back vibe of a summer day. The madness is miles away.

Alex and Sammy live in a place where porches get shot up and the menacing slide of a passing van's door can carry a deadly threat. Surviving demands rapid decisions, urgent navigation to safety or, as Sammy — who counts three near-misses in his life — describes it, just dumb luck.

For 12 weeks at a time, the YMCA of Metro Chicago is pairing kids from one of the Chicago neighborhoods on edge with people who know well the struggle of surviving a dangerous place: military veterans who fought in the nation's two most recent wars. Youths from Little Village, including Sammy and Alex, were part of the pilot Urban Warriors program run by the YMCA and the Adler School of Professional Psychology. The program is part of a broader effort by the Y to focus on treating mental and emotional wounds that youths growing up in Chicago's more fractured communities suffer.

In the first six months of this year, homicides in Chicago held even at 171, but the number of

shooting victims was up 8 percent, with 1,103 people wounded. Though homicides have dropped significantly from the early 1990s, when as many as 900 people were slain, Chicago still ranks tops among the nation's larger cities in shootings and homicides. In neighborhoods such as Little Village, Englewood and Roseland, the threat seems as constant and consistent as ever, no matter what the statistics say.

That kind of violence takes a toll on young people — especially if they also face challenges such as poverty, dysfunctional families or incarcerated parents, said Eddie Bocanegra, one of the executive directors of the YMCA's new initiative. Some teens cope through drinking or drugs, and they feel fed up. That can fuel violent behavior, Bocanegra contends.

On a recent weekend, as more than 80 people were shot, 16 fatally, Chicago once again made national news for its violence. These are the youths who face it daily. And this is one effort, though small, to help them cope.

Some of the teens in Urban Warriors have been referred by the justice system or by their schools; others were recruited by the Y's violence intervention workers. But they all share high exposure to trauma, including violence. Many of the teens are involved with gangs.

The vets and youths in the program have shared "war stories," of losing friends and witnessing violence. Each week, a kid seemed to arrive with a fresh battle story. "I've seen people get shot," said Alex, whose mind flashes back to those events. "It does ... mess my head up. But I am living it every day. So, like, I guess I put up with it."

Even at 15, Sammy has not one, but three "war stories" to tell. "We passed through 24th and



PHOTOS BY JOHN J. KIM, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/MCT

Members of the Urban Warriors program huddle during a group meeting in Willow Springs, Ill., on June 14. The program pairs military veterans with teens from neighborhoods on edge in Chicago to provide guidance and leadership for the youths.



Alex, 18, falls after being tagged in a touch football game during the Urban Warriors program.

Millard, and some dude on a bike came out and started shooting, saying, 'Where you from, where you from?' We turned real quick. We ran across real quick. I was like, 'Let's go, let's go!'"

That was the first shooting Sammy recalled. Then there was

one at his high school as he left varsity practice.

In the third shooting incident, Sammy, who is not in a gang, escaped a spray of gunfire on a porch where he was sitting. In his haste to get away, he fell down the porch stairs and landed in a good

hiding place. "I got behind a tree, luckily, and they didn't see me," he said.

Bocanegra and his co-director, Ryan Lugala-Hollon, started designing trauma-based treatment programs a year ago across the city. By the end of the year, they will have served 400 youths and 100 parents. Urban Warriors was launched in Little Village but will expand into South Chicago at the end of the summer.

Vets chosen for the project, after two rounds of interviews, indicated a willingness to work with at-risk youths. They also suffered stress from having served. Many, having grown up in Little Village, too, talked of their own scrapes with trouble or of having family members involved in violence. One, Alberto Bolerias — who survived a roadside bomb near Tikrit, Iraq, in 2007 — had been shot in Chicago.

Organizers of Urban Warriors also saw a critical benefit to the veterans — providing a sense of purpose, something many who leave the military crave but struggle to find, they said.

MILITARY

Senator cites PTSD in his college thesis plagiarism

The Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — U.S. Sen. John Walsh said Wednesday his failure to attribute conclusions and verbatim passages lifted from other scholars' work in his master's degree thesis at the U.S. Army War College was an unintentional mistake caused in part by post-traumatic stress disorder.

The apparent plagiarism first reported by The New York Times was the second potentially damaging issue raised this year involving the Democrat's 33-year military career, which has been a cornerstone of his campaign to keep the seat he was appointed to in February when Max Baucus resigned to become U.S. ambassador to China.

National Democrats said Wednesday they remained "100 percent behind Sen. Walsh" in his campaign against Republican Rep. Steve Daines.

Even before the plagiarism revelations, top Democratic strategists saw Walsh's campaign as an uphill pull, never counting on

it as key to holding their Senate majority.

Republicans need to gain six net seats this fall to control the Senate. South Dakota, West Virginia and Montana are seen as likely Republican Party pickups, and the party has several opportunities to grab the other three contests they need. Top on their lists are incumbent Democrats running in states President Barack Obama lost in 2012: Arkansas, Louisiana, North Carolina and Alaska.

Walsh told The Associated Press that when he wrote the thesis he was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder from his service in Iraq, was on medication and was dealing with the stress of a fellow veteran's recent suicide.

"I don't want to blame my mistake on PTSD, but I do want to say it may have been a factor," the senator said. "My head was not in a place very conducive to a classroom and an academic environment."

Walsh submitted his thesis, titled "The Case for Democracy as a Long Term National Strategy,"

to earn his Master of Strategic Studies degree in 2007, nearly two years after he returned from Iraq and about a year before he became Montana's adjutant general overseeing the state's National Guard and Department of Military Affairs.

The paper includes a series of unattributed passages taken from the writings of other scholars.

The first page borrows heavily from a 2003 Foreign Affairs piece written by Thomas Carothers, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and a 2009 book by Natan Sharansky with Ron Derner called "The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror."

Sharansky is a former Soviet dissident and chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel. Derner is the Israeli ambassador to the United States.

All six of the recommendations that Walsh listed at the end of his paper are taken nearly word for word without attribution from a Carnegie paper written by Carothers and three other schol-



LAUREN VICTORIA BURKE/AP

Sen. John Walsh, D-Mont., right, and his son, Michael, leave the Old Senate Chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington in February after a ceremonial swearing-in ceremony with Vice President Joe Biden.

ars at the institute.

One section is nearly identical to about 600 words from a 1998 paper by Sean Lynn-Jones, a scholar at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, a research institute at Harvard. Carothers and a Derner spokesman declined to comment.

Lynn-Jones said Walsh appears to have received a degree on the basis of work that was not entirely his own, and that anyone seeking credit for an academic degree "needs to acknowledge where the material is coming from."

"Maybe he unintentionally

didn't cite my work, but it's up to the Army War College to determine whether this is acceptable by their standards or not," Lynn-Jones said.

An after-hours call to the Carlisle, Pa., school rang unanswered Wednesday.

Walsh declined to answer repeated questions about whether he believed he earned the degree if the thesis' conclusions were not his own. "I know about war strategy and defense because of firsthand experience leading a battalion and the Montana National Guard," he said.

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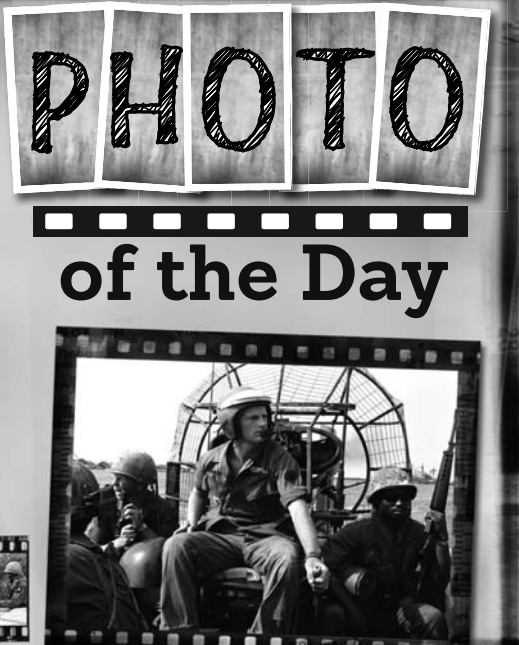
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MILITARY

Navy to retool Blue Angels after scandal

By DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

The Navy's investigative report examining the leadership of former Blue Angels commanding officer Capt. Gregory McWherter is filled with embarrassing details that raise questions about his leadership and the culture in the squadron. The Navy found that McWherter chose not to stop sexual harassment and condoned pornography and creepy behavior in the workplace.

"I believe he ... became susceptible to hubris and arrogance, blinding him to the common sense judgments expected of all service members, but especially those entrusted with command," Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., commander of the Navy's Pacific Fleet, wrote in the investigation's final report.

One example: As the investigation puts

'I believe he ... became susceptible to hubris and arrogance, blinding him to the common sense judgments expected of all service members, but especially those entrusted with command.'

Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr.
Pacific Fleet commander

it, "a large blue and gold penis was painted on the roof of the center point trailer at the Blue Angels' winter training facilities in El Centro." It was so large, it was "visible from satellite imagery," including those used on Google Maps.

The Navy replaced McWherter with Cmdr. Thomas Frosch in November 2012. But it isn't stopping there in shaking things up. Navy Times reported that the Blue An-

gels will get an executive officer — a No. 2 in command — for the first time in the squadron's history. The selection process for the unit also will be overhauled to include more oversight from the Navy's personnel officials.

Vice Adm. David Buss told Navy Times that he made the change because he wanted the traditional "command triad" to exist in the Blue Angels. That includes the com-

manding officer, the executive officer and a senior enlisted adviser, the command master chief.

That addresses an issue raised in the investigation. McWherter first led the Blue Angels without issue from 2008 to 2010. He was brought back to lead the squadron again in 2011, and failed to set effective limits on his staff's behavior after he returned, investigators found. The basic thinking: If an executive officer, or "XO," had been present in the Blue Angels, there would have been an additional check on what was occurring in the unit.

The changes were announced as the Navy publicized who will be in the Blue Angels in 2015. The new executive officer will be Cmdr. Bob Flynn, a S-3B naval flight officer. He will not participate in flight demonstrations, focusing instead on administrative needs, travel and training, Buss told Navy Times.

Elite troops prepare for post-Afghan operations

By DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

The Marine Corps began preparing its Special Operations component in earnest for life after Afghanistan last year, joining a war game overseen by U.S. Special Operations Command designed to assess how its elite troops could better fit into U.S. maritime operations.

A year later, that picture is starting to emerge.

Navy SEALs and commandos with Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command are among a cadre of troops working from the Navy's new ship, the USS Independence, this month as part of the 2014 Rim of the Pacific military exercise off the coast of Hawaii. The mission began with U.S. helicopters delivering Special Operations troops to the flight deck of the Independence, and then lowering an 11-meter inflatable boat into the Pacific Ocean to conduct a simulated raid known as a visit, board, search and seizure, or VBSS, military officials said.

Navy SEALs, MARSOC Marines and special operations troops with South Korea and Peru are all involved, U.S. officials said. Combined, they're testing how the Independence will work as an "afloat forward staging base," a concept in which



COREY T. JONES/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

A U.S. Marine Special Operations team member lowers a working dog to an inflatable boat set to depart the USS Independence during a training mission in the 2014 Rim of the Pacific exercise.

the U.S. military can launch everything from humanitarian assistance missions to counterpiracy raids from a ship resourced to help.

The Navy announced in 2012 that it was keeping the aging USS Ponce, an amphibious assault ship, in service as an interim afloat forward staging base for the Middle East. That ship will get additional use this summer with the installation of the Navy's new experimental laser system, capable of hitting small aircraft and attack boats.

It's the Independence and other newer ships that will be used by Special Operations in the longer term, however. It is part of the Navy's new LCS class, envisioned to provide everything from anti-submarine warfare to counterterrorism missions. The ship is not without its critics. After years of questions about its reliability and ability to survive warfare against larger vessels, the Pentagon decided in January to cut the size of the future LCS fleet from 52 to 32.

Special Operations command-

ers are preparing for life on other new ships, as well. Navy and Marine Corps officials have both indicated they're looking for ways to use the new Mobile Landing Platform ship class, which features an unusual design with a ramp that will allow larger ships to transfer vehicles to the MLP directly.

MARSOC and other highly trained troops with the Marine Corps' Force Reconnaissance units already have started working in unconventional arrangements from Navy destroyers.

Ground broken for Fort Hood memorial

The Associated Press

KILLEEN, Texas — Ground was broken Tuesday in Central Texas for a memorial to victims of the 2009 Fort Hood shooting rampage that left 13 people dead and more than 30 wounded.

Ceremonies were held for the Fort Hood November 5 Memorial near the Killen Civic and Conference Center.

The proposal calls for spending more than \$400,000 for a memorial pavilion and bronze sculptures honoring the 13 people who were slain. An organizational website also recognizes those who were wounded in the attack committed by Army psychiatrist Nidal Hasan.

Hasan was convicted and sentenced to death last year for the Nov. 5, 2009, mass shootings. Hasan, who was a major at the time of the attack, said he acted to protect Islamic insurgents abroad from American aggression.

The idea for the memorial was conceived by Hiram Dixon, an area resident who was on a hunting trip in South Dakota when the shooting occurred, according to the Killen Daily Herald.

"I came home with such a heavy heart, I could not fathom such a thing happening," he said. "I was sitting having lunch in Temple and began doodling ... I sat and doodled a little gazebo with a garden ... I really appreciate all that has come from a little bit of idea of a drawing on a napkin."

Memorial organizers are still accepting donations.

Dixon said the day held a range of emotions for participants.

"It's a good day that we are all here to honor and remember what happened," he said. "It's a sad day that we have to be here at all."

Naval Academy welcomes new commandant at ceremony

The Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Vice Adm. Walter Carter is the new superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy.

The academy held a change-of-command ceremony Wednes-

day in Annapolis.

Carter was recently president of the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, R.I. He graduated from the academy in 1981. Carter also is a graduate of the Navy Fighter Weapons School, Top Gun.

He has commanded the Enterprise Carrier Strike Group 12. He also was commander of the USS Carl Vinson, one of the Navy's largest nuclear-powered super carriers. He has flown 125 combat missions.

Carter is the academy's 62nd superintendent. He is a native of Burrillville, R.I.

He is succeeding Vice Adm. Michael Miller who retired at the ceremony. Miller had been the superintendent since 2010.

NATION



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Speaker of the House John Boehner, R-Ohio, talks with reporters Wednesday on Capitol Hill in Washington as incoming Majority Leader Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., looks on.

House, Senate advance competing border plans

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — At an impasse on immigration, House Republicans and Senate Democrats advanced competing proposals Wednesday for dealing with tens of thousands of young migrants showing up at the southern border. Each side quickly ruled the other's approach unacceptable, leaving any solution unclear with Congress' annual August recess looming.

Unless Democrats capitulate, "We're going to be at an impasse and we will have earned even greater disdain from the American people than we already have," said Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

But Republicans are having difficulty agreeing even among themselves.

At a morning meeting of House Republicans, Speaker John Boehner urged action to address the border crisis, reminding GOP lawmakers that the Border Patrol and other agencies would be running out of money in coming months because of the heavy influx of unaccompanied minors and families at the border.

The Obama administration is assessing the need for sending National Guard troops to the border. A Pentagon and Homeland Security team is at the Rio Grande Valley Border Patrol Sector.

Some House Republicans have called for a surge of troops to help enforce border security, and Texas Gov. Rick Perry said this week he will send 1,000 National Guard troops to the border.

A working group appointed

by Boehner rolled out proposals including sending in the National Guard and changing a 2008 trafficking victims law to allow Central American children to be turned around quickly at the border and sent back home. Lawmakers announced plans to chop President Barack Obama's \$3.7 billion emergency spending request for the border crisis down to \$1.5 billion.

But as they left the meeting in the basement of the Capitol, some of the more conservative members of the GOP caucus made clear they were unconvinced.

"If Republicans move forward on this, we're now jumping right in the middle of President Obama's nightmare and making it ours," said Rep. John Fleming, R-La. Fleming said he worried that any House-passed bill "will be turned on its head" by the Senate "and actually make the problem even worse."

Fleming said Boehner told Republicans he was undecided about bringing the plan to the floor because he didn't know whether there were enough votes to pass it.

In his comments to reporters after the meeting, Boehner was noncommittal.

"This discussion with our members is going to continue, but we're not made any decisions," he said. "I'd like to act. We've got a humanitarian crisis on the border that has to be dealt with."

The path forward was not much clearer in the Senate, where Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Barbara Mikul-

ski, D-Md., introduced legislation paring Obama's spending request back to \$2.7 billion for more immigration judges, detention facilities and other resources.

"We cannot turn our backs on these children," Mikulski said on the Senate floor.

But Mikulski said she was omitting from her legislation any changes to the 2008 trafficking victims law, which Republicans say has contributed to the crisis by allowing Central American youths to stay in this country indefinitely while awaiting far-off court dates.

"We don't want a backdoor version of bad immigration reform," Mikulski said. "This bill is only a money bill. It does not include immigration legislation."

Republicans continued to demand changes to the 2008 law as the price for approving any money for the crisis, and Republican senators made clear they would not lend their votes without those provisions. "A fundamental of any agreement is the repeal of the 2008 law," McCain said.

Without GOP support, it wasn't clear the Senate would be able to advance Mikulski's bill, and it wasn't evident whether a compromise could emerge.

White House officials and some Democrats initially were open to changing the 2008 law, but there has been a backlash from immigration advocates who say kids would be sent back to their deaths at the hands of vicious gangs in parts of Central America. Now most Democrats say they are strongly opposed.

Crises drown out Obama's economic message for election

By KATHLEEN HENNESSEY
Tribune Washington Bureau

LOS ANGELES — As President Barack Obama delivered a pitch to donors at a Democratic fundraiser Tuesday night, events forced him to change a key piece of his by now well-rehearsed description of the political landscape.

Americans worry about economic instability, he said, as well as stagnant incomes, and "things in Congress feel broken." But there was also this to worry about: "big challenges overseas."

"Part of people's concern is just the sense that around the world, the old order isn't holding, and we're not quite yet to where we need to be in terms of a new order," he told donors gathered at a home in Seattle.

Obama's statement that overseas worries increasingly preoccupy Americans may or may not accurately diagnose the national psyche, but it unquestionably describes a predicament he and his allies face in a difficult midterm election year.

The president's party had hoped to model its case to voters on his 2012 re-election campaign: emphasizing more Democratic voters with a promise to fight for working people. But turmoil overseas has increasingly drowned that message out.

Obama's aides planned a summer of loose campaign-style trips, including carefully staged

informal visits with "ordinary" Americans struggling to get ahead in the uneven economy. He has done several such visits, but they have been overshadowed by news around the world. Last week he was accused by opponents of wasting time on political gestures during a crisis.

The degree to which the economic message has been drowned out worries Democratic allies. Obama's efforts have been "in the right direction but need more amplification" to connect with most voters, said Mike Podhorzer, political director for the AFL-CIO. The "chaos in the world" has become a significant barrier to accomplishing that goal, he said.

On Wednesday, the president spent much of the day with the well-heeled, urging them to back Democrats who will support "common-sense steps" so that "this country would grow faster."

To donors lunching near the olive grove at the home of George Marcus, a Silicon Valley real estate mogul, Obama lamented that too many people feel "they're stuck; they feel like they're 'treating water.'"

Meanwhile, he said, Republicans are focused solely on jamming up the works in Washington.

"I would love nothing more than a loyal and rational opposition, but that's not what we have right now," he said.

Study finds record-low midterm turnout amid widespread discontent

By MARK Z. BARABAK
Los Angeles Times

There may be no more self-absorbed session than politics.

Consider: You visit the grocery store. When you cross the parking lot, you won't run a gauntlet of critics from a rival supermarket bad-mouthing the produce section, demeaning the selection of dog food and questioning the sell-by date on the ground chuck.

Or you visit the dentist. There's no barrage of radio and TV ads, produced by a competitor, trashing your dentist's education and background, impugning the sanitation of his equipment or wondering why he charges such an exorbitant price for a routine checkup.

And yet ridicule, contempt and disparagement are not just the common language of political campaigns, they're pretty much the only words spoken these days when Democratic candidates discuss their Republican opponents, and vice versa.

Little wonder people are so disgusted with politics and poli-

ticians. Would you visit a dentist if there were even the slightest doubt about properly sterilized equipment?

So there was a certain what-did-you-expect resignation accompanying a report this week from the Center for the Study of the American Electorate, which showed Americans are staying away from the polls this election season in droves.

Specifically, of the nearly 123 million voters who were eligible to cast ballots in 25 statewide primaries for governor and U.S. Senate, only 18 million did so.

That's a 14.6 percent turnout. If precedent holds, the study says the nation will record the lowest midterm primary turnout in its history; already more than half the states holding primary elections this year have had record-low turnouts, including California. Only three — West Virginia, Nebraska and North Carolina — had higher numbers in 2010 than in the midterm election four years ago.

NATION



John Zemblidge, right, of Phoenix, leads a group of about a dozen death penalty opponents as they protest the execution of Joseph Rudolph Wood at the state prison in Florence, Ariz., on Wednesday. AP

Judge strikes down the gay marriage ban in Colorado

The Associated Press

DENVER — For years, gay rights activists in Colorado repeatedly said it would be only a matter of time before they would be allowed to marry.

They repeated that even as they struggled for years to get civil unions passed through the Colorado Legislature. Then, less than a year after civil unions became law here on June 1, 2013, state courts began to topple gay marriage bans across the country, albeit with stays pending appeals to higher courts.

On Wednesday, a federal judge in Denver struck a blow to Colorado's voter-approved gay marriage ban, calling it unconstitutional but issuing a temporary stay to give the state a chance to appeal.

The ruling could be another step toward a showdown in the U.S. Supreme Court to settle the question of gay marriage bans once and for all.

Judge Raymond P. Moore's decision was in response to a lawsuit filed July 1 by six gay couples who asked the court for an injunction ordering that the state's ban no longer be enforced. He put his ruling temporarily on hold, giving Colorado Republican Attorney General John Suthers until Aug. 25 to seek a stay from the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver, or from the U.S. Supreme Court.

Shortly after the ruling, Suthers filed a notice of appeal to the 10th Circuit. He said he's confident the appeals court will continue the stay to let the U.S. Supreme Court be the final authority on the question of gay-marriage bans.

Gay couples applauded Wednesday's ruling, but with mixed emotions.

One of the plaintiffs, Sheila Schroeder, 49, said the ruling brought both excitement and grief.

"My ruling has made us thrilled and we are grieving a little," she said. "The grief comes from John Suthers insistence on clogging up the courts with unnecessary lawsuits."

Suthers' said in a statement after the ruling that his appeal is necessary until a definitive decision from the nation's highest court.



BRENNAN LINSLEY/AP

Attorney Mari Newman, right, stands with her plaintiffs and their supporters following a court hearing on same-sex marriage at the federal district court in Denver on Tuesday.

Ariz. execution takes 2 hours

Witnesses say convicted murderer was 'gasping and snorting for more than an hour'

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — A condemned murderer took nearly two hours to die and gasped for about 90 minutes during an execution that quickly rekindled the national debate on capital punishment in the U.S.

The execution Wednesday of Joseph Rudolph Wood, 55, took so long that his lawyers had time to file an emergency appeal while it was ongoing. The Arizona Supreme Court also called an impromptu hearing on the matter and learned of his death during the discussions.

"He has been gasping and snorting for more than an hour," Woods' lawyers wrote in a legal filing demanding that the courts stop it. "He is still alive."

It is the third prolonged execution this year in the U.S., in-

cluding one in Ohio in which an inmate gasped in similar fashion for nearly a half-hour. An Oklahoma inmate died of a heart attack in April, minutes after prison officials halted his execution because the drugs weren't being administered properly.

Gov. Jan Brewer said later that she's ordering a full review of the state's execution process, saying she's concerned by how long it took for the administered drug protocol to kill Wood.

Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne's office said Wood was pronounced dead at 3:49 p.m., one hour and 57 minutes after the execution started.

An Associated Press reporter who witnessed the execution saw Wood start gasping shortly after a sedative and a pain killer were injected into his veins. He gasped more than 600 times over the next hour and a half. During the gasps, his jaw dropped and his chest expanded and contracted.

An administrator checked on Wood a half-dozen times. His breathing slowed as a deacon said a prayer while holding a rosary.

Wood finally stopped breathing and was pronounced dead 12 minutes later.

"Throughout this execution, I conferred and collaborated with our IV team members and was assured unequivocally that the inmate was comatose and never in pain or distress," said state Department of Corrections Director Charles Ryan.

Defense lawyer Dale Baich called it a botched execution that should have taken 10 minutes.

"Arizona appears to have joined several other states who have been responsible for an entirely preventable horror — a bungled execution," Baich said. "The public should hold its officials responsible and demand to make this process more transparent."

Family members of Wood's victims in a double 1989 murder said they had no problems with the way the execution was carried out.

"This man conducted a horrific murder and you guys are going, let's worry about the drugs," said Richard Brown, the brother-in-law of Debbie Dietz. "Why didn't

they give him a bullet, why didn't we give him Drano?"

Wood looked at the family members as he delivered his final words, saying he was thankful for Jesus Christ as his savior. At one point, he smiled at them, which angered the family.

"I take comfort knowing today my pain stops, and I said a prayer that on this or any other day you may find peace in all of your hearts and may God forgive you all," Wood said.

Arizona uses the same drugs — the sedative midazolam and painkiller hydromorphone — that were used in the Ohio execution earlier this year. A different drug combination was used in the Oklahoma case.

"These procedures are unreliable and the consequences are horrific," said Megan McCracken, of the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law's Death Penalty Clinic.

The governor said medical and eyewitness accounts indicated that Wood did not suffer and he died in a lawful manner in which justice was served.

Social Security's \$288M IT project doesn't work

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After spending \$288 million on a new computer system to handle disability claims, the Social Security Administration still can't get it to work. And officials can't say when it will.

Six years ago, Social Security embarked on an aggressive plan to replace outdated computer systems overwhelmed by a growing flood of disability claims. The project has been racked by delays and mismanagement, according to an internal report commissioned by the agency.

'The program has invested \$288 million over six years, delivered limited functionality, and faced schedule delays as well as increasing stakeholder concerns.'

McKinsey and Co. report

Today, the project is still in the testing phase, and the agency can't say when it will be operational or how much it will cost.

In the meantime, people filing for disability claims face long delays at nearly every step of the

process — delays that were supposed to be reduced by the new processing system.

"The program has invested \$288 million over six years, delivered limited functionality, and faced schedule delays as well as

increasing stakeholder concerns," said a report by McKinsey and Co., a management consulting firm.

As a result, agency leaders have decided to "reset" the program in an effort to save it, the report said. As part of that effort, Social Security brought in the outside consultants from McKinsey to figure out what went wrong.

They found a massive technology initiative with no one in charge — no single person responsible for completing the project. They issued their report in June, though it was not publicly released.

NATION

Glitch crashes US passport, visa operations

By MATTHEW LEE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The State Department's global database for issuing travel documents has crashed, resulting in major delays for potentially millions of people around the world waiting for U.S. passports and visas, officials said Wednesday.

Unspecified glitches in the department's Consular Consolidated Database have resulted in "significant performance issues, including outages" in the processing of applications for passports, visas and reports of Americans born abroad since Saturday, spokeswoman Marie Harf said. She said the problem is worldwide

and not specific to any particular country, citizenship document, or visa category.

"We apologize to applicants and recognize this may cause hardship to applicants waiting on visas and passports," she said. "We are working to correct the issue as quickly as possible."

Harf said the problems with the

database have resulted in an "extensive backlog" of applications, which has, in turn, hampered efforts to get the system fully back online.

It was not immediately clear how many people are affected, but two U.S. officials familiar with the situation said some 50,000 applicants were hit in one country

alone. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly or identify the country.

The database is the State Department's system of record and is used to approve, record and print visas and other documents to ensure that national security checks are conducted on applicants.

Mourners pray for man who died in NY police custody

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Gospel music mixed with cries of grief at a Brooklyn church filled to overflowing with mourners for the funeral of a man who died in police custody after an officer placed him in an apparent chokehold. His family was scheduled to meet with federal prosecutors in efforts to get a civil rights probe of his death.

The service for Eric Garner on Wednesday night at Brooklyn's Bethel Baptist Church opened with a mix of solemn prayer and an organ-backed gospel medley. Garner's relatives stopped in front of his open casket, some weeping and wailing.

Garner, who had asthma, died last week on Staten Island. An amateur video shows a plain-clothes police officer placing him in what appears to be a chokehold. Garner, 43, can be heard gasping, "I can't breathe!"

Police had suspected Garner of selling loose, untaxed cigarettes on the street.

At the church, the program depicted Garner as an angel and included a collage of photographs from his life and death, including one of a sign echoing what he told officers before he died: "This Stops Today."

At the end of the service, Garner's relatives stood near the cas-

ket, some holding each other up, their faces gleaming with tears, as a young woman from the family delivered a stirring rendition of the Mariah Carey song "Hero."

Garner's sister, Ellisha Flagg, thanked mourners for supporting the family and asked all of his relatives in the church to stand before introducing Garner's 90-year-old aunt, Katherine Williams.

Williams said she assumed the role of grandmother after Garner's death and recalled how he picked her up on the Fourth of July and they spent the day with family on Coney Island. She then belted out a spiritual song that got mourners, including the Rev. Al Sharpton, clapping along.

Sharpton told the crowd he was scheduled to meet Friday with the U.S. attorney's office, and he called for a civil rights probe. He took Ramsey Orta, the man who shot the video, to the lectern and praised him for recording the arrest.

Sharpton fired up the crowd with a point-by-point dissection of the events that led to Garner's death.

"Yes, God will make a way, but God expects something of us," he said. "When you can, in broad daylight, choke one of God's children, he expects us to stand up and demand justice."



Josh WOOD/AP

Slow ND fire alert raises concern

Emergency vehicles respond to a large fire at Red River Supply, an oil supply company, in Williston, N.D., early Tuesday. A more efficient system must be established to alert residents of danger in North Dakota's booming oil patch, an emergency manager and residents said, after authorities failed to alert the public for more than six hours when a facility storing toxic chemicals exploded. No one was injured or killed in the explosion and fire that started about midnight Monday and raged for much of Tuesday at the plant. The blaze shot fireballs into the air, and a plume of smoke prompted the cancellation of flights for several hours.

GM profit falls 85 percent on recall costs

The Associated Press

DETROIT — Recall costs chopped \$1.5 billion from General Motors' bottom line in the second quarter, cutting its net income by 85 percent.

The automaker, which is in the midst of the worst recall crisis in its history, posted a net profit of \$190 million, or 11 cents per share. A year ago, GM made \$1.26 billion, or 75 cents per share. Without one-time items, GM would have made 58 cents per share, equaling Wall Street's expectations.

So far this year, GM has recalled almost 30 million vehicles,

surpassing the company's annual record.

GM took two pretax charges tied to the recalls: \$400 million to compensate victims of ignition switch-related crashes and \$874 million to account for recall expenses during the next 10 years. It also booked \$1.2 billion in expenses for recalls announced during the quarter. The after-tax impact of those items was \$1.5 billion.

GM's safety problems began earlier this year with the recall of 2.6 million small cars with faulty ignition switches. The company has admitted knowing about the

problem for more than 10 years, yet it didn't issue any recalls until now. GM says at least 13 people have died in crashes caused by the switches, although lawmakers say the total is closer to 100.

The \$400 million will fund a compensation plan for families of those killed and people injured in crashes caused by the switches. It's being administered by compensation expert Kenneth Feinberg.

Chief Financial Officer Chuck Stevens said the figure is an estimated total cost based on outside actuarial calculations, but it could go as high as \$600 million.

Study finds 10M adults have gained health care coverage

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A new study estimates that more than 10 million adults gained health insurance by midyear as the coverage expansion under the Affordable Care Act took hold in much of the country.

The study published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine found that the share of Americans ages 18 to 64 without insurance dropped by a little more than 5 percentage points.

States that embraced the law's Medicaid expansion saw significant coverage gains among low-income, uninsured people. About half the states have expanded.

The law offers subsidized private insurance for middle-class people who don't have access through their jobs and expanded Medicaid for low-income adults.

The latest study results are in line with findings by Gallup and with estimates from the Congressional Budget Office.

WORLD

Palestinians attacked after seeking shelter

By **IBRAHIM BARZAK**
AND **PETER ENAY**
The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Israeli tank shells hit a compound housing a U.N. school in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, killing at least 15 people and wounding dozens who were seeking shelter from fierce clashes on the streets outside, Palestinian officials said, as Israel pressed forward with its 17-day war against the territory's Hamas rulers.

Pools of blood stained the school courtyard in the northern town of Beit Hanoun, amid scattered books and belongings. There was a large scorch mark in the courtyard marking the place where one of the tank shells hit. Dozens of people, including children, were wheeled into a nearby hospital as sirens wailed.

The strike occurred during a day of heavy fighting throughout the coastal territory. Israel says the war is meant to halt rocket fire from Palestinian militants in Gaza and destroy a sophisticated network of cross-border tunnels. International efforts to bring about a truce appeared elusive, with the violence continuing and Hamas reiterating its demand for a cease-fire and that a crippling Egyptian and Israeli blockade on Gaza be lifted.

Gaza health official Ashraf al-Kidra said the dead and injured in the school compound were among hundreds of people seeking shelter from heavy fighting in the area.

It was the fourth time a U.N. facility has been hit in fighting between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza, since the Israeli operation began July 8. UNRWA, the Palestinian refugee agency, has said it has found militant rockets inside two vacant schools but the target of Thursday's strike was not immediately clear.

The Israeli military said it was reviewing the incident, saying that rockets launched by Hamas had landed in the Beit Hanoun area during fighting with its forces, and that those rockets may be responsible for the deaths.

Israel insists it does its utmost



Displaced Palestinians leave the Beit Hanoun hospital in the northern Gaza Strip to seek other shelter after an Israeli attack hit their previous shelter in a U.N. school Thursday.

to prevent civilian casualties but says Hamas puts Palestinians in danger by hiding arms and fighters in civilian areas. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum condemned the violence, saying Israel was targeting displaced people and "committing massacres."

UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness called on all sides "to respect the sanctity of civilian life, but also the inviolability of U.N. property."

The deaths raised the overall Palestinian death toll in the conflict that began on July 8 to at least 751, al-Kidra said. Israel has lost 32 soldiers, all since July 17, when it widened its air campaign into a full-scale ground operation. Two Israeli civilians and a Thai worker in Israel have also been killed by rocket or mortar fire.

With the number of casualties growing on both sides, the international community has stepped

up diplomatic efforts to broker a cease-fire. But Hamas is insisting on the lifting of the 7-year-old

'We started this operation to return peace and quiet to Israel. ... And we shall return it.'

Benjamin Netanyahu
Israeli prime minister

of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Israel imposed the blockade in 2006 after Hamas and other militants abducted an Israeli soldier in a deadly cross-border raid. It tightened the siege in 2007 after Hamas seized power from for-

ces loyal to Abbas, but had eased some of the restrictions in recent years.

Egypt tightened its own restrictions last year after the overthrow of a Hamas-friendly government in Cairo and has destroyed many of the cross-border smuggling tunnels that sustained Gaza's economy, and which were also used by Hamas to bring in arms.

British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond on Thursday urged Hamas to agree on an immediate humanitarian cease-fire and said Israel and the Palestinian Authority could then come together to hold talks.

"Hamas must agree to a humanitarian cease-fire without preconditions for the sake of the people in Gaza," he said during a news conference after meetings with Egyptian officials in Cairo. "We are greatly concerned by on-

going heavy humanitarian crisis and the loss of lives."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made no reference to the cease-fire efforts in underscoring his determination to neutralize the rocket and tunnel threats.

More than 2,000 rockets have been fired at Israel from Gaza since July 8, and the Israeli military says it has uncovered more than 30 tunnels leading from Gaza to Israel, some of which have been used by Hamas to carry out attacks.

"We started this operation to return peace and quiet to Israel. ... And we shall return it," Netanyahu said after meeting with Hammond earlier Thursday in Israel.

In other violence, six members of the same family and an 18-month-old infant boy were killed when an Israeli airstrike hit the Jebaliya refugee camp early Thursday, according to Gaza police and health officials. Twenty others were injured in the strike, they said, and rescuers were digging through the rubble of flattened homes, looking for survivors.

An airstrike on a home in the southern Gaza town of Abbasan killed five members of another family, al-Kidra.

Heavy fighting was reported along the border of central Gaza, according to Gaza police spokesman Ayman Batniji. Israeli troops fired tank shells that reached parts of the Bureij and Maghazi refugee camps, although no injuries were immediately reported.

Clashes also erupted between Palestinian fighters and Israeli troops in the northern town of Beit Lahiya, and the sound of explosions was audible across the town, Batniji said.

Israeli naval vessels, meanwhile, fired more than 100 shells along the coast of Gaza City and northern Gaza, Batniji said, adding that rescue teams were unable to operate in the area because of the heavy fire.

Iraqi prison convoy attacked; Kurd elected president

By **QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA**
AND **SINAN SALAHEDDIN**
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraqi lawmakers elected a veteran Kurdish politician as the nation's new president on Thursday, hours after an attack on a prison convoy killed dozens of people, brutally underscoring the challenges faced by the country's leaders as they struggle to form a new government.

Fouad Massoum, 76, one of the founders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan party led by Iraq's previous president, Jalal Talabani, announced the victory in a ceremony after winning two-thirds of the votes in parliament, noting

the "huge security, political and economic tasks" facing the next government.

Massoum's election comes as Iraq is facing its worst crisis since the 2011 withdrawal of U.S. troops amid the blitz offensive last month by the Islamic State extremist group that captured large swaths of land in the country's west and north, including Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul.

The militants have also seized a huge chunk of territory straddling the Iraq-Syria border, and have declared a self-styled caliphate in the territory they control.

Iraq's large, U.S.-trained and -equipped military melted away in

the face of the militant onslaught, sapping morale and public confidence in its ability to stem the tide, let alone claw back lost turf.

Hours before Massoum was elected, militants fired mortar shells at an army base where suspects facing terrorism charges were being held in Taji, about 12 miles north of Baghdad. Fearing a jailbreak, authorities evacuated the facilities, officials said.

As the prisoners were being bused through an area nearby, militants attacked again, this time with roadside bombs, igniting a gunbattle that left 52 prisoners and eight soldiers dead, the officials said, adding that another

eight soldiers and seven prisoners were wounded.

It was not immediately clear if the prisoners were killed by soldiers or militants, or if the Islamic State was involved. No one immediately claimed responsibility on the bus attack.

The vote for president — a post previously held by ailing Kurdish leader Talabani — is widely viewed as a step toward achieving consensus among political rivals, seen as necessary for tackling the deteriorating security crisis.

Massoum is considered a soft-spoken moderate, known for keeping good relations with Sunni and Shiite Arab politicians.



Fouad Massoum, a Kurd, was named Iraqi president Thursday.

WORLD

Pope meets Sudanese woman sentenced to die

ROME — Pope Francis met privately Thursday with a Sudanese woman who refused to recant her Christian faith in the face of a death sentence, blessing the woman as she cradled her infant daughter born just weeks ago in prison.

The Vatican characterized the visit with Meriam Ibrahim, 27, her husband and their two small children as "very affectionate."

The 30-minute encounter took place just hours after the family landed at Rome's Ciampino airport, accompanied by an Italian diplomat who helped negotiate her release, and welcomed by Italy's premier, who hailed it as a "day of celebration."

18 children, 1 man die in India train-bus crash

HYDERABAD, India — Eighteen children were killed Thursday when a train crashed into their school bus at an unmanned railroad crossing in southern India, police said.

The bus driver also died while another 20 children ages 7 to 14 were injured and hospitalized, 15 of them in critical condition, said Telangana state education minister G. Jagdishwar Reddy.

They were on their way to school Thursday morning when the train hit the bus, dragging it several hundred feet along the tracks, according to the Hindu Times newspaper.

Jihadist attack besieged Syrian army base

BEIRUT — Fighters from the extremist Islamic State group stormed parts of a besieged army base in northern Syria on Thursday, setting off clashes that left dozens killed or wounded on both sides, activists said.

The assault, which began shortly after midnight, came a week after Islamic State fighters captured a gas field in the central province of Homs, an attack that left more than 200 people dead.

Fighters from the Islamic State group in the past few weeks have seized a huge chunk of territory straddling the Iraq-Syria border, where they declared a self-styled caliphate. They also have captured much of Syria's oil-rich eastern province of Deir el-Zour, which borders Iraq.

South Korea unveils stimulus plan

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's government announced a \$40 billion stimulus plan Thursday after the shock of a deadly ferry sinking slowed economic growth to the lowest level in three quarters.

The finance ministry said government spending would increase by 11.7 trillion won (\$11.4 billion). Another 29 trillion won would be available to small- and medium-sized companies through loans and other financial support.

To stimulate the real estate market, the government will ease mortgage rules that limit house-hold loans for home buyers.

From The Associated Press

Officials seek to secure crash site

By DMYTRO VLASOV
The Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine — Two more military aircraft carrying remains of victims from the Malaysian plane disaster arrived in the Netherlands on Thursday, while Australian and Dutch diplomats joined to promote a plan for a U.N. team to secure the crash site which has been controlled by pro-Russian rebels.

All 298 people aboard Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 — most of them Dutch citizens — were killed when the plane was shot down on July 17. U.S. officials say the Boeing 777 was probably shot down by a missile from territory held by pro-Russian rebels, likely by accident.

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who said he fears some remains will never be recovered unless security is tightened, has proposed a multinational force mounted by countries such as Australia, the Netherlands and Malaysia that lost citizens in the disaster.

To that end, Abbott said Thursday he had dispatched 50 police officers to London to be ready to join any organization which may result.

Australia's Foreign Minister Junia Bishop was traveling with her Dutch counterpart Frans Timmermans to Kiev to seek an agreement with the Ukraine government to allow international police to secure the wreckage, Abbott said.

Details including which countries would contribute and whether officers would be armed and protected by international troops were yet to be agreed, Abbott said.

Meanwhile, in Ukraine political news, Ukrainian Prime Minister



DMITRY LOVETSKY/AP

Pro-Russian fighters ride an airborne self-propelled artillery gun Nona in downtown Donetsk, eastern Ukraine on Thursday.

Arseniy Yatsenyuk announced his resignation Thursday, opening the way for new elections that would reflect the country's starkly changed political scene after the ouster of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich in February.

The first set of remains from the crash site arrived in the Netherlands on Wednesday and were met by Dutch King Willem-Alexander, Queen Maxima and hundreds of relatives. The two planes Thursday brought 74 more coffins to the Netherlands, said government spokesman Lodewijk Hekking.

The Dutch investigators gave permission for what it called "local parties" to move wreckage at the site in order to recover remaining victims. Conditions at the site, spread across farm fields in open countryside, have made recovery and investigation a slow and sometimes chaotic process, with rebel gunmen controlling the area and

at times hindering access.

Patricia Zorko, head of the National Police Unit that includes the Dutch national forensic team, said some 200 experts, including 80 from overseas, were working at a military barracks on the outskirts of the central city of Hilversum to identify the dead. Around the world some 1,000 people are involved in the process, which also includes gathering information from next of kin.

After the experts believe they have positively identified a body, they defend their findings to an international panel. If both agree, the positive identification will be sent to a Dutch prosecution office, which has the power to release the body to the next of kin.

The Dutch Safety Board said investigators in England successfully downloaded data from Flight 17's Flight Data Recorder. It said "no evidence or indications of

manipulation of the recorder was found." It did not release any details of the data.

Meanwhile, police and traffic authorities appealed to the public not to stop on the highway as a convoy of hearses passes by Thursday on its way from Eindhoven Air Base to Hilversum.

The Dutch Foreign Ministry said Thursday that the number of Dutch victims had risen by one to 194, taking into account a woman with joint German and Dutch nationalities who earlier had been listed as German.

Senior U.S. intelligence officials said Tuesday that Russia was responsible for "creating the conditions" that led to the crash, but offered no evidence of direct Russian government involvement.

The officials said the plane was likely shot down by an SA-11 surface-to-air missile fired by Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. The U.S. officials cited intercepts, satellite photos and social media postings by separatists, some of which have been authenticated by U.S. experts.

Russia on Thursday brushed off the accusations.

Pro-Russian rebels and Ukrainian government troops have been fighting for more than three months, leaving at least 400 dead and displacing tens of thousands.

Ukrainian forces are trying to ride the momentum of taking the strategic city Sloviansk on July 5 which was in rebel hands for more than two months. Government forces are now closing in on Donetsk, where insurgents regrouped after leaving Sloviansk, and are trying to cut off supply routes to rebels based in the neighboring Luhansk region.

Official: Air Algerie flight 'probably crashed'

By AOMAR OUALI
AND BRAHIMA OUEDRAGO
The Associated Press

ALGIERS, Algeria — An Air Algerie flight carrying 116 people from Burkina Faso to Algeria's capital disappeared from radar early Thursday over northern Mali, officials said. France's foreign minister said no wreckage had been found, but that the plane "probably crashed."

The MD-83 vanished less than an hour after takeoff from Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. Air Algerie Flight 5017 was operated by Spanish airline Swiftair, which owns the plane.

"Despite an intensive search, at the moment I speak, no trace of the aircraft has been found," French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius told reporters in Paris. "The plane has probably crashed."

Two French fighter jets are among aircraft scouring the rugged north of Mali for the plane, which was traveling from Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou, to Algiers, the Algerian capital.

More than 50 French were

aboard the plane along with 27 Burkina Faso nationals and passengers from a dozen other countries. The flight crew was Spanish.

The flight was being operated by Spanish airline Swiftair, the company said in a statement, and the plane belonged to Swiftair.

The plane sent its last message about 0130 GMT, asking Niger air control to change its route because of heavy rains in the area, Burkina Faso Transport Minister Jean Bertin Ouedrago said.

The disappearance of the Air Algerie plane comes after a spate of aviation disasters. Fliers around the globe have been on edge ever since Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 disappeared in March on its way to Beijing. Searchers have yet to find a single piece of wreckage from the jet with 239 people on board.

Last week, a Malaysia Airlines flight was apparently shot down by a surface-to-air missile while flying over a war-torn section of Ukraine. The back-to-back disasters involving Boeing 777s flown by the same airline were too much of a coincidence for many

airline passengers.

Then this week, U.S. and European airlines started canceling flights to Tel Aviv after a rocket landed near the city's airport. Finally, on Wednesday, a Taiwanese plane crashed during a storm, killing 48 people.

French Transport Minister Frederic Cuvillier said the Air Algerie flight vanished over northern Mali. He spoke Thursday from a crisis center set up in the French Foreign Ministry. Cuvillier didn't specify exactly where the plane disappeared over Mali, or whether it was in an area controlled by rebels.

But Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal said on Algerian state television said 10 minutes before disappearing, it was in contact with air traffic controllers in Gao, a city essentially under the control of the Malian government, though it has seen lingering separatist violence.

The plane had been missing for hours before the news was made public. It wasn't immediately clear why airline or government officials didn't make it public earlier.

The flight path of the plane

from Ouagadougou to Algiers wasn't immediately clear. Ouagadougou is in a nearly straight line south of Algiers, passing over Mali where unrest continues in the north.

Northern Mali fell under control of ethnic Tuareg separatists and then al-Qaida-linked Islamic extremists following a military coup in 2012. A French-led intervention last year scattered the extremists, but the Tuaregs have pushed back against the authority of the Bamako-based government.

A senior French official said it seems unlikely that fighters in Mali had the kind of weaponry they could shoot down a plane.

The official, not authorized to speak publicly, said on condition of anonymity that they primarily have shoulder-fired weapons — not enough to hit a passenger plane flying at cruising altitude.

Swiftair, a private Spanish airline, said the plane was carrying 110 passengers and six crew, and left Burkina Faso for Algiers at 0117 GMT Thursday, but had not arrived at the scheduled time of 0510 GMT.

FAITH



PHOTOS BY RICK LOOMIS, LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

People gather for a mass at St. Marcellinus Catholic Church in Commerce, Calif., on July 7 to celebrate Santo Toribio Romo Gonzalez, a Catholic saint who they believe watches over immigrants.

Immigrants flock to revere the 'people's saint'

BY ESMERALDA BERMUDEZ
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — People say he's their guardian, their lawyer, their smuggler. On a recent afternoon, they lined up at his feet with their requests:

"Please, my mother needs a visa.

"Please, my niece was caught by agents.

"Please, I can't go on being illegal.

As a border crisis involving the influx of tens thousands of children from Central America unfolds, the faithful of Southern California are flocking to Santo Toribio Romo Gonzalez.

The Catholic saint, who they believe watches over immigrants, flew in for his first visit to Los Angeles early this month. He came from a tiny town in the Mexican state of Jalisco in the form of a fragile wooden statue that will tour churches across three counties.

"It cost the price of two first-class tickets to get him here, but we did it," said Rosa Gonzalez, of Chatsworth, who handled the saint's transportation. "Now here he is, bringing blessings to everyone."

Romo Gonzalez was a simple priest, killed during a religious uprising in 1928. He was canonized just 14 years ago. Latinos, particularly Mexicans, have made him legendary.

They say the saint, often wearing a cowboy hat and boots, miraculously appears to border

crossers when they are most desperate—in the desert, along roadsides and in migrant shelters.

Santo Toribio gives them food, money and water. And like a coyote, or smuggler, he helps them cross into the United States. Sometimes, when the path is too perilous, he tells them to turn around and return home.

"I owe him everything," said Jose Ochoa, who showed up to welcome the saint to his church, Santiago de Compostela in Lake Forest. "I couldn't imagine dying without coming to see him to say thank you."

The 32-year-old cook crossed the border illegally in 2005. He came with his son, then 4, to reunite with his wife and family. Before leaving Jalisco, Ochoa said, his grandfather gave him a small, laminated photo of Santo Toribio.

Ochoa had never heard of the saint, but his grandfather told him: "Have faith in him. He will take care of you."

This month, the father of three lit a candle before the 4-foot-tall statue and bowed his head in gratitude.

Many immigrants who come to the United States illegally carry a photo of the light-skinned, blue-eyed saint safely tucked in their wallets. Before they leave Mexico, those who can stop in Santa Ana de Guadalupe, Santo Toribio's hometown.

There, farmworkers have seen their dusty pueblo transformed into a religious mecca.

Tens of thousands of pilgrims



Jose Ochoa holds a photo of Santo Toribio Romo Gonzalez that he carried with him when he crossed the border illegally in 2005.

arrive in air-conditioned buses each week to pay tribute to Santo Toribio's bones, which are kept in a small casket. Some travel back from Texas, California or Chicago to give thanks for favors fulfilled. Others enter the church on their knees to pray for the safe return of a loved one they haven't heard from for a while.

All around Santa Ana de Guadalupe, businesses bear the saint's name: Santo Toribio Ice Cream, Santo Toribio Pharmacy, Santo Toribio Gift Shop. There's a replica of his modest home, complete with furniture and housewares. In the street, locals pitch their saint-themed wares to tourists: key chains, figurines, T-shirts and pirated CDs.

"He's given many families in town a way to make a living and

not have to go north," said Martin Rizo Soto, a priest who has traveled to California to safeguard the statue wherever it goes.

The number of visitors became so overwhelming that a few years ago the town raised enough money to build a church with seating for 1,000 people.

In the United States, Santo Toribio has come to represent solidarity to immigrants facing difficult times.

In 2008, when one of the nation's toughest anti-immigration laws was passed in Oklahoma, a Tulsa church responded by building a shrine to Santo Toribio—the only one outside Jalisco.

Since then, other churches have asked for his sacred bone relics, as well as visits from the saint. To meet the demand, Santa Ana de Guadalupe a year ago created a travel-friendly statue of Santo Toribio that rests inside a big steel trunk on wheels.

"Now he's able to come to see all the faithful who can't travel back to Jalisco to see him," Rizo Soto said.

Despite the saint's fame, the Catholic church has yet to recognize him as a patron to immigrants. His popularity tends to leave some Catholics scratching their heads, said Ed Benioff, the Los Angeles Archdiocese's director of the Office of New Evangelization.

Unlike St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Romo Gonzalez, who died a martyr at age 28, never paid particular attention to immigrants.

In fact, in 1920 he wrote a play titled "Let's Go North!" that warned migrants against traveling to the States. He worried that they would lose their values, Rizo Soto said.

But decades after Romo Gonzalez was shot to death by Mexican soldiers, the tales of his intervention on behalf of immigrants have spread across Jalisco and beyond.

"He's the people's saint," Benioff said. "His legend has grown from the start in the most grassroots way."

During one of Santo Toribio's stops in the city of Commerce, parishioners from St. Marcellinus carried the 50-pound statue on their shoulders. They danced and sang. Then they took turns touching the most sacred part of the figure, his chest, where a bone from the saint's left ankle is kept behind a round piece of glass.

Quietly they stepped up to him to whisper their requests and express their gratitude.

Francisca Romero, 56, of Compton held up a gold chain with an angel to have it blessed. She said she became a legal citizen a decade ago.

Now, like many, she showed up concerned for relatives and friends—and for the latest immigration epidemic playing out in the news.

"Those children," said Romero, who works in a sofa factory. "I want this saint to keep them safe from all harm and to please help us all."

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NATION

'More than shipwrecks'

Photos reveal sunken Nazi submarine off the coast of Texas

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — The photos taken nearly a mile under the Gulf of Mexico are so clear that small holes are visible in a lifeboat that may have gone down or been scuttled when a passenger ship was sunk by a Nazi submarine in 1942.

Interpretations differ. But the pictures taken remotely from Robert Ballard's exploration vessel Nautilus are among the brightest and clearest ever taken of the American ship Robert E. Lee and the U-166, a German U-boat that was sunk by depth charges from the Lee's escort during World War II on July 30, 1942.

Ballard, whose crew photographed, videotaped and mapped the vessels for a National Geographic documentary to air on PBS, uses a pair of tethered, remotely piloted mini-sub. Along with additional cameras, the second allows more light than the usual single submersible available to most scientists.

"You just get spectacular video," said Robert Church, senior marine archaeologist for C&C Technologies Inc., of Lafayette, an underwater surveying and mapping company.

Some of the Nautilus' images and models will be used for a documentary about Operation Drumbeat, the Nazi code name for submarine attacks on Allied shipping off U.S. coasts in 1942, according to Ballard.



PHOTOS BY OCEAN EXPLORATION TRUST/AP

Above: A group of vessels is seen in the Gulf of Mexico. The U.S. vessels — along with the SS Robert E. Lee, below — were sunk by German submarines during World War II.

Researchers on the Nautilus thought the holes in the lifeboat might be from bullets used to scuttle it after the rescues, said Susan E. Poulton, a spokeswoman for Ballard. Church, whose company has surveyed the Lee 10 times, disagreed. The boats in question appear to have sunk still attached to the davits that would be used to lower them, he said.

The U-166, one of dozens of German subs sent to the U.S., sank the Robert E. Lee with one torpedo before the U-boat itself was broken in two by a depth charge from the Lee's naval escort. Nearly all of the hundreds aboard the Lee escaped into lifeboats or rafts. The U-boat com-

mander, Oberleutnant zur See Hans-G Kuhlmann, and the 51 men in his crew went down with their sub.

It is the only German sub known to have sunk in the Gulf of Mexico during World War II, while the Lee was among 56 Allied ships sunk by German submarine crews there, said Jack Irion, a marine archaeologist for the U.S. Bureau of Offshore Energy Management, the agency that commissioned C&C's study.

Photographs taken in recent years clearly show the 105-millimeter deck gun mounted forward of the 252-foot sub's conning tower and the smaller gun mounted on the Lee, which rests on the ocean floor about a mile away.

The Lee carried a crew of 131, six merchant marine officers and 270 passengers, many of them survivors of ships sunk in the Caribbean by U-boats, according to researchers.

Melanie Wiggins, a Texas author of a history on German operations in the Gulf in wartime, said she almost dreaded looking at the images from the Nautilus because of heart-rending accounts of sinkings and resulting deaths.

"I was so happy to see the beautiful photographs," she said. "The corals, the little fishes look like they're forming a little reef. It was so lovely to see that. They're more than shipwrecks. They're having a new life as part of the sea."

Things to know about Germany's U-Boats

NEW ORLEANS — The U-166 was deployed as part of Nazi Germany's all-out effort to cut off Britain and other U.S. allies from shipping vital equipment and personnel. It met its end in July 1942 in the Gulf of Mexico, about 45 miles southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River, after a depth charge attack.

WOLVES OF THE SEA

Germany's war on Allied supply lines focused mainly on North Atlantic shipping lanes. But the U-boats also ranged into the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. The architect of Germany's submarine war plan was Grand Adm. Karl Doenitz, who deployed submarines in groups known as wolfpacks for warfare against merchant ships.

A FORMIDABLE FORCE

As U-boats took their toll on Allied shipping, they also played a role in Germany's propaganda effort. An early success for Adolf Hitler came in October 1939 when the U-47 sank the British naval base at Scapa Flow, Scotland, and sank the battleship HMS Royal Oak. The U.S. Navy, stretched after the December 1941 attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor, was hard-pressed to track down the U-boats in 1942 as they preyed on East Coast shipping. Only after U.S. shipyards turned out massive numbers of escort vessels and patrol planes and new tactics were developed did the Navy get the upper hand on the U-boats.

THE U-166

War records show Germany built more than 1,000 U-boats during the war. The U-166 joined the fleet in March 1942 and was prowling the Gulf of Mexico in July 1942 when it torpedoed and sank the merchant vessel SS Robert E. Lee off the mouth of the Mississippi River. A U.S. escort quickly moved in and dropped depth charges, sending the submarine to the bottom. The U-166 was slow — traveling underwater at about 9 mph — and vulnerable to quicker surface ships.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The U-boat — or "untersee-boat" in German — was first used in World War I by Germany and its ally Austria-Hungary. German submarine warfare on merchant ships was one reason the United States entered the war in 1917. The German navy still designates its submarines as U-boats. The small modern fleet is not nuclear-powered but runs on diesel-electric power.

— From The Associated Press

KNOWLEDGE

THE RUPTURED DUCK

IS POWER.

STRIPES CENTRAL

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PACIFIC SPORTSBLOG

PACIFIC STORM TRACKER

OMBUDSMAN

PACIFIC



Tokyo museum leaves kids flush with knowledge on human waste

Above: Young visitors wearing hats made to look like feces climb a ladder to a slide of a giant mock toilet to experience what it is like to be flushed down a toilet bowl at an exhibition at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation in Tokyo on Thursday. Left: A guide speaks about the sewer processing system to young visitors. The exhibition, aimed at children, focuses on the idea of "what an environmentally friendly toilet is" and the effect human waste has on the environment.

PHOTOS BY SHIZUO KAMBAYASHI/AP

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, employment for cybersecurity professionals is projected to grow by 37% by 2020.* Reinvent yourself to meet the growing demand for cybersecurity professionals, whether in the military or out. Plus, you can learn from experts using curriculum that's continually assessed by advisory councils so you can be confident you're learning the latest developments in the field.

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*Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook* report on *Information Security Analysts* (job Outlook, 2012-2022). Published Date: Jan. 8, 2014.
We want you to make an informed decision about the university that's right for you. For more about the graduation rate and median debt of students who completed each program, as well as other important information—visit www.APU.S.edu/disclosure.

FACES

MORE MOORE

'Criminal Minds' star to appear on soap

The Associated Press

Shemar Moore is returning to his daytime roots with a two-day guest appearance on "The Young and the Restless."

During his return on Sept. 10-11, Moore will reunite with Kristoff St. John, who plays his on-screen brother Neil Winters. Moore's character Malcolm Winters returns to Genoa City after leaving two years before without a proper goodbye. He comes back for a family visit to make amends and catch up.

Moore says he's excited about returning to the CBS show on which he got his start. He was a regular from 1994-2002, left the show and returned in 2004-05. Moore won a Daytime Emmy for supporting actor in 2000.

Moore currently stars on the CBS drama "Criminal Minds."

"The Young and the Restless" recently won its eighth Daytime Emmy for best drama series. The show has been daytime's top-rated drama for 25 years.

Shemar Moore stars on the drama "Criminal Minds," but he got his start on the daytime soap "The Young and the Restless."

CBS



Bing Crosby's children recall dad's duet with David Bowie

The Associated Press

David Bowie's duet with Bing Crosby on the entertainer's 1977 Christmas television special left an indelible impression on Crosby's teenage children.

Harry, Mary and Nathaniel Crosby were on set when Bowie arrived to tape his appearance. The mash-up between the cardigan-clad singer known for "White Christmas" and the glam rocker who was in his Ziggy Stardust phase required some last-minute reworking of "The Little Drummer Boy." The result was a new melody and lyrics called "Peace on Earth." The duet remains a holiday staple and a curiosity. Bowie was 30 and Crosby was 73 at the time. Crosby died of a heart attack a month after the taping in September 1977.

Mary Crosby remembered Bowie arriving on set. "The doors opened and David walked in with his wife. They were both wearing full-length mink coats, they have matching full makeup and their hair was bright red," she told the summer TV critics' tour Wednesday. "We were thinking, 'Oh my god.'"

Nathaniel Crosby added, "It almost didn't happen. I think the producers told him to take the lipstick off and take the earrings out. It was just incredible to see the contrast."

Watching in the wings, the Crosby kids noticed a transformation. "They sat at the piano and David was a little nervous," Mary Crosby recalled. "Dad realized David was this amazing musician, and David realized Dad was an amazing musician. You could see them both collectively relax, and then magic was made."

The Crosby siblings — now all in their 50s — and their 80-year-old mother, Kathryn, appeared Wednesday to discuss the American Masters episode, "Bing Crosby Rediscovered," airing Dec. 2 on PBS.

'Sinister Six' spinoff next up for Spider-Man

From wire services

The Spider-Man franchise will debut next with a "Sinister Six" spinoff in 2016, pushing "The Amazing Spider-Man 3" to 2018, Sony's Columbia Pictures said Wednesday in announcing an updated schedule.

By ordering "Sinister Six" ahead of the next "Spider-Man" movie, the studio hopes to expand the franchise with the group of Marvel super-villains.

Released in May, "The Amazing Spider-Man 2" accumulated \$706 million worldwide and only just surpassed \$200 million domestically. That was considered a disappointing result, since it failed to top its 2012 predecessor, which made \$758 million.

"Sinister Six," to be directed by Drew Goddard, is one of two spinoffs planned for the Spider-Man universe. No date has been set for the other shootoff in development, "Venom."

Sony had previously scheduled "Spider-Man" sequels for 2016 and 2018, but "The Amazing Spider-Man 3" will now be pushed to 2018. In its place, Sony has slotted in "Uncharted," an action film.

'Late Show' to stay in New York City

It's not really a surprise, but it's official anyway: "Late Show with Stephen Colbert" is staying in the Ed Sullivan Theater in New York City.

When Colbert takes over from David Letterman sometime next year, the production will remain in the space that Letterman has called home for 21 years.

New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and CBS President and Chief Executive Les Moonves made the announcement Wednesday, ensuring that about 200 jobs related to the show would stay in NYC.

"Les Moonves and CBS have made the right decision in choosing to continue investing in New York, and as David Letterman passes the baton to Stephen Colbert, I look forward to watching 'The Late Show' from the historic Ed Sullivan Theater for years to come," Cuomo said in a statement.

Colbert is a longtime resident of New Jersey and hosts "The Colbert Report" from New York City.

FX: Overnight ratings are meaningless

It's a rite nearly as old as television: the morning after a new show premieres, network executives wait impatiently for the Nielsen company's estimate of how many people watched, and rush to report the first sign of a hit. Leaders at the FX network are trying something new: They're no longer talking publicly about how their programs do on opening night, believing those numbers don't accurately reflect how many people see their shows. Instead, they're waiting a few days to see how many people catch up via time shifting.

Inside baseball perhaps, but also an illustration of how TV viewing is changing. The early numbers, besides poorly representing a show's true audience, can blatantly mislead, said FX President John Landgraf. Besides the overnight numbers, Nielsen measures how many people watch a show within three days of its first airing, and within a week. Landgraf said it's fairer to make judgments on a show after three days.



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Just the ticket

Nick Friedland of San Francisco waits for the departure of the Wikia Fan Express train to Comic-Con International: San Diego on Wednesday at Union Station in Los Angeles. A fellowship of "Lord of the Rings" fans are forgoing the preferred method of Middle-earth transportation — that would be horseback — to journey to Comic-Con in a transformed private train car. The fan-centric social networking site and "Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor" publisher Warner Bros. Interactive picked 40 fans to ride the one-of-a-kind carriage for the four-day pop-culture celebration, which kicked off Thursday at the San Diego Convention Center. The train ride had unique on-board entertainment, including sneak peeks and Q&A sessions.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police probing flag switch on bridge

NY NEW YORK — Two large American flags atop the Brooklyn Bridge — one of New York City's most heavily secured landmarks — were replaced sometime Monday night with white banners that were spotted Tuesday morning fluttering in the wind.

Police crime scene and intelligence detectives were investigating how the flags were switched out on the famed span that connects Brooklyn and Manhattan, and there were no reports of suspicious activity, police said. Officers in patrol cars are stationed at both ends of the bridge, which is constantly monitored by surveillance cameras.

Police removed the white flags just before noon from poles on the stone supports that hold cables above the bridge.

Man dies after hole he dug on beach collapses

CA HALF MOON BAY — A young man died after a hole he dug on a Northern California beach collapsed and trapped him in the sand for at least five minutes, authorities said Tuesday.

The man, identified as Adam Pye, 26, of San Lorenzo, dug a roughly 10-foot-deep hole at Francis State Beach and was standing in it around 5:30 p.m. Monday when the sand started caving in around him, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Capt. Jonathan Cox said.

About 30 people, including the man's friends and bystanders, frantically dug with their hands, buckets and other improvised tools to expose his head. They were able to free his head in about five minutes, just as firefighters arrived at the scene, Cox said.

Rescuers extricated him in about 35 minutes and tried to revive him, but he died at the scene, Cox said.

Police: Homeless most arrested for pot use

WA SEATTLE — An analysis of the first six months of Seattle police enforcement under new marijuana laws finds homeless people and black males are more likely to be ticketed for public pot use than anyone else.

The report released Wednesday said officers issued 82 tickets for public possession and use between Jan. 1 and June 30.

Most of the citations were issued in public parks in the downtown core. One person was ticketed twice.

Almost all the people cited are men with an average age of 34. Although more than two-thirds of the people ticketed are younger than 40, 40 people as old as 77 have been ticketed for marijuana infractions during the past six months.

Real estate heir charged in candy incident

TX HOUSTON — A New York City real estate



DON CAMPBELL, THE (ST. JOSEPH, MICH.) HERALD-PALLADIUM/AP

Walking the world

Erik Bendl and his dog, Nice, walk along M-139 north of Berrien Springs, Mich., as they head toward St. Joseph, Mich., on Wednesday. Bendl, 52, began his "Walking the World For Diabetes Awareness" from his home in Louisville, Ky., on June 13 and has been averaging 10 miles each day. In the last six years Bendl has walked in more than 39 states as well as Washington, D.C., with a goal of helping diabetes organizations and encouraging healthy lifestyles through diet and exercise.

heir who admitted killing his neighbor in Texas a decade ago is facing a new charge in Houston — that he urinated on candy at a drug store.

Authorities said Robert Durst, 71, was arrested Sunday after arguing with store employees. They said Durst was charged with criminal mischief after urinating on at least \$100 worth of confectionary.

Durst declined comment after being released Wednesday night on \$5,000 bond.

In 2001, Durst was arrested as a fugitive and admitted killing his neighbor and dumping the remains in Galveston Bay. He claimed self-defense and was acquitted of homicide charges.

2nd boy injured fingers on Disney World ride

FL ORLANDO — A report says a 12-year-old boy suffered cuts to four fingers on Walt Disney World's Pirates of the Caribbean ride, three months before a British tourist had a similar accident.

The report made public Monday by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shows the boy lacerated his fingers in mid-April. No other details were released.

The British tourist lost two fingertips on his right hand while on the Pirates of the Caribbean ride. Disney spokeswoman Jacque Wahler said that as a precaution,

guests are no longer being loaded in the back row where the two people were when they were injured. She said the ride has been inspected and is deemed safe.

Jail to offer online video visits for a fee

PA GREENSBURG — A western Pennsylvania county jail plans to start offering online video visits with inmates next month as a way to raise money for the county.

Westmoreland County Prison officials have hired Renovo Software, of Edina, Minn., to install Web cameras at several locations in the lockup about 30 miles east of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review reported.

Inmates currently are allowed three weekly in-person visits with up to three people at once. Those visits last 30 minutes.

Under the new policy, inmates could arrange up to two 25-minute video visits each week. The county will charge \$15 per visit, with about \$12.75 of it going into the county's general fund.

Gun maker, citing new law, will leave state

DC WASHINGTON — Blaming Maryland's new gun-control laws, Beretta USA said Tuesday that it is relocating its manufacturing operations from Accokeek, Md., to

Tennessee, a move that will eliminate about 160 jobs in southern Prince George's County.

The Italian company had disclosed a \$45 million plan this year to expand operations to a new factory near Nashville, Tenn. Beretta has decided to go beyond that plan because, a senior executive said, the company is "very worried about the wisdom of maintaining a firearm manufacturing factory" in Maryland.

Maryland's new gun restrictions ban 45 types of assault rifles and put in place touch fingerprint, photo identification and training requirements. Magazines are limited to 10 rounds.

Sketch released in peacock shooting death

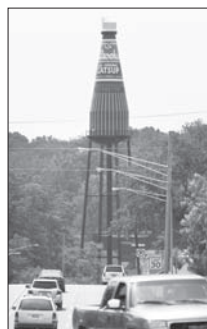
CA RANCHO PALOS VERDES — Officials have released a sketch of a man suspected of shooting and killing a peacock from his Mercedes-Benz earlier this month in Southern California.

The Los Angeles Times reported Tuesday that witnesses told authorities they saw the suspect shooting the exotic bird with a pellet gun July 9 on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, about 20 miles south of downtown Los Angeles.

Witnesses said the bird was standing in a driveway, and the man fired from the driver's seat of the silver Mercedes sedan.

From wire reports

THE CENSUS



170 The height in feet of a giant ketchup bottle that once served

as a water tower and has now been put up for sale in Collinsville, Ill. What's billed as the "World's Largest Bottle of Catsup" replicates a bottle of Brooks Old Original Rich and Tangy Catsup, which was once produced in the buildings beneath the tower. The 65-year-old, 100,000-gallon tower held water — never ketchup — and it hasn't been used since Brooks moved in in the early 1960s. The asking price (which includes the former Brooks' plant) is \$500,000.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

US economy slow, but may be sturdier

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Out of a seemingly hollow recovery from the Great Recession, a more durable, if still slow-growing, U.S. economy has emerged.

That conclusion, one held by a growing number of economists, might surprise many people. After all, in the five years since the recession officially ended, Americans' pay has basically stagnated. Millions remain unemployed or have abandoned their

job searches. Economic growth is merely plodding along.

Yet as the economy has slowly healed, analysts say it has replaced some critical weaknesses with newfound strengths. Among the trends:

■ Fewer people are piling up credit card debt or taking on risky mortgages. That should make growth more sustainable and avoid a cycle of extreme booms and busts.

■ Banks are more profitable

and holding additional cash to help protect against a repeat of the 2008 market meltdown.

■ More workers hold advanced degrees. Education typically leads to higher wages and greater job security, reducing the likelihood of unemployment.

■ Inflation is under control. Runaway price increases would be destructive. Low inflation can lay a foundation for growth.

■ Millions who have reached retirement age are staying on the job. That lessens the economic

drag from retiring baby boomers and helps sustain consumer spending.

Over the long run, such trends could help produce a sturdier economy, one less prone to the kind of runaway growth that often ends in a steep and sudden slump. The downside? At least in the short term, those same trends have prevented the economy from accelerating. When consumers borrow and spend less freely, for example, they restrain growth.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (July 25)	\$1.3818
Dollar buys (July 25)	€0.7237
British pound (July 25)	\$1.74
Japanese yen (July 25)	99.00
South Korean won (July 25)	1,002.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771
British pound	\$1.6971/0.5892
Canada (dollar)	1.0738
China (Yuan)	6.1949
Denmark (Krone)	5.5384
Egypt (Pound)	7.1506
Euro	\$1.3466/0.7426
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7503
Hungary (Forint)	228.78
Israel (Shekel)	3.4059
Japan (Yen)	101.81
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2827
Norway (Krone)	6.2188
Philippines (Peso)	43.38
Poland (Zloty)	3.108
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7505
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2407
South Korea (Won)	1,030.33
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9027
Thailand (Baht)	31.85
Turkey (New Lira)	2.0099

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., rates provided for reference when buying currency, all figures are foreign currencies to the pound, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.03
30-year bond	3.36

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$3.896	\$4.076	\$4.241	\$4.172
Change in price	-4.2 cents	-3.8 cents	-4.0 cents	-2.5 cents
Netherlands	--	\$4.914	\$5.207	\$5.045
Change in price	--	-12.0 cents	-11.7 cents	-3.3 cents
U.K.	--	\$4.046	\$4.211	\$4.142
Change in price	--	-6.9 cents	-4.0 cents	-2.5 cents
Azores	--	--	\$4.187	--
Change in price	--	--	-4.0 cents	--
Turkey	--	\$4.188	\$4.343	\$4.343
Change in price	--	no change	no change	no change
Italy	--	\$4.635	\$5.042	--
Change in price	--	no change	no change	no change
Italy	\$4.088	\$4.201	--	\$4.201
Change in price	no change	--	--	no change

JAPANESE GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.759	--	\$3.859
Change in price	--	-4.0 cents	--	-2.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.779	--	--	\$3.859
Change in price	-2.0 cents	--	--	-2.0 cents
South Korea	\$3.719	--	\$3.999	--
Change in price	-4.0 cents	--	-4.0 cents	--
Guam	\$3.709**	\$3.889	\$4.089	--
Change in price	-4.0 cents	-4.0 cents	-4.0 cents	--

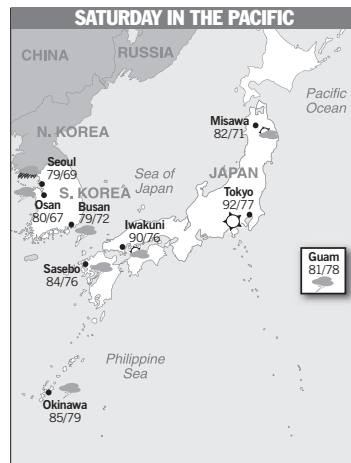
* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of July 26-Aug. 1

MARKET WATCH

July 23, 2014

Dow Jones Industrials	-26.91
	17,086.63
Nasdaq composite	17.68
	4,473.70
Standard & Poor's 500	3.48
	1,987.01
Russell 2000	0.01
	1,158.11

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Friday's US temperatures

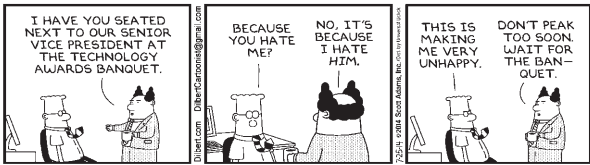
City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr
Ablene, Tex	101	75	Clr	Chattanooga	87	66	PCldy	Fort Wayne	79	53	PCldy	Louisville	83	62	PCldy
Akron, Ohio	77	53	Clr	Cheney	89	62	PCldy	Franklin	70	70	Clr	Lubbock	101	71	PCldy
Albany, N.Y.	77	53	Clr	Chicago	77	58	Clr	Goodland	96	68	Clr	Macon	90	72	PCldy
Albuquerque	77	53	PCldy	Cincinnati	81	56	Clr	Grand Junction	80	54	PCldy	Madison	89	75	Clr
Allentown, Pa.	83	54	Clr	Cleveland	78	56	Clr	Grand Rapids	80	54	PCldy	Medford	92	55	Clr
Amarillo	101	69	Rain	Colorado Springs	92	61	PCldy	Great Falls	76	52	Clr	Memphis	90	66	PCldy
Anchorage	60	53	Rain	Columbia, S.C.	91	72	Clr	Green Bay	75	55	PCldy	Midland-Odessa	101	73	Clr
Asheville	80	63	PCldy	Columbus, Ga.	79	54	Clr	Harrisburg	82	56	Clr	Minneapolis	75	59	PCldy
Atlanta	87	70	PCldy	Concord, N.H.	82	52	Clr	Hartford	81	58	Clr	Milwaukee	75	59	PCldy
Atlantic City	83	62	Clr	Corpus Christi	96	73	Clr	Havana	80	53	Clr	Missoula	77	44	Clr
Austin	97	75	PCldy	Dallas-Ft. Worth	103	80	PCldy	Honolulu	88	77	Clr	Mobile	88	77	Clr
Baltimore	85	72	Clr	Dayton	79	53	Clr	Houston	97	76	PCldy	Montgomery	91	72	PCldy
Baton Rouge	95	73	Clr	Daytona Beach	91	75	Clr	Huntsville	91	65	Clr	Nashville	89	64	PCldy
Bilings	84	55	PCldy	Denver	91	55	PCldy	Indianapolis	78	57	PCldy	New Orleans	91	77	Clr
Birmingham	88	69	Clr	Des Moines	90	64	Clr	Jacksonville	93	70	Clr	New York City	82	65	Clr
Bismarck	83	62	Clr	Detroit	79	60	Clr	Jacksonville	93	70	Clr	Newark	84	65	Clr
Boise	96	50	Clr	El Paso	101	78	Clr	Janeau	93	52	Rain	Newark, Va.	84	70	Clr
Boston	78	61	Clr	El Paso	101	78	Clr	Kansas City	96	68	Clr	North Platte	92	68	Clr
Bridgeport	81	63	Clr	Elkins	75	52	PCldy	Key West	90	82	Clr	Oklahoma City	104	76	Clr
Brownsville	95	77	PCldy	Erie	75	56	Clr	Knoxville	84	64	Clr	Omaha	93	71	PCldy
Buffalo	78	55	Clr	Eugene	85	49	Clr	Lake Charles	92	76	PCldy	Orlando	93	76	Clr
Burlington, Vt.	82	52	Clr	Evansville	84	59	PCldy	Lansing	80	53	PCldy	Paducah	87	60	PCldy
Caribou, Maine	78	51	Clr	Fairbanks	60	49	Clr	Las Vegas	108	86	Clr	Pendleton	93	69	Clr
Charleston, S.C.	91	75	Clr	Fargo	83	65	Clr	Lexington	98	71	PCldy	Philadelphia	85	65	Clr
Charleston, W.Va.	80	56	PCldy	Flagstaff	83	56	PCldy	Lincoln	98	71	PCldy	Phoenix	110	91	Clr
Charlotte, N.C.	86	70	PCldy	Fort Smith	79	57	Clr	Little Rock	92	62	Clr	Pittsburgh	78	54	Clr
								Los Angeles	86	69	Clr				

National temperature extremes
Hi: Wed., 121, Death Valley, Calif.
Lo: Wed., 29, Bodie State Park, Calif.

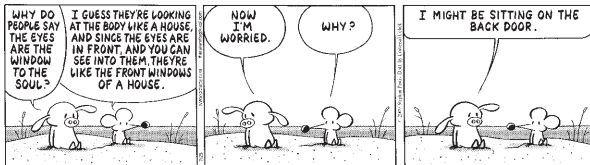
Frazz



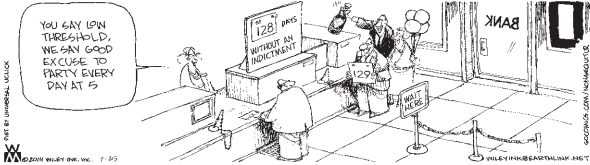
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



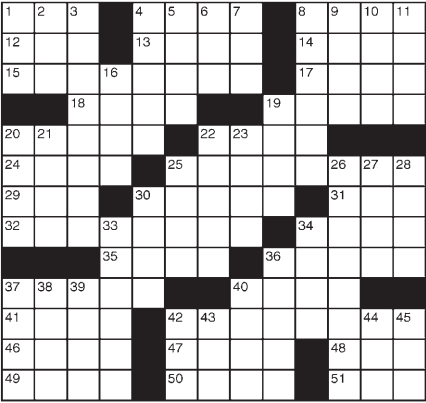
Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



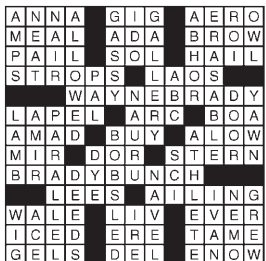
ACROSS

- 1 Make notes
- 4 Cry from the crow's nest
- 8 Small recipe measure
- 12 Listener
- 13 Bread spread
- 14 Writer Wiesol
- 15 Rare delivery
- 17 Pop
- 18 Wan
- 19 Poet's concern
- 20 Fleishy cheeks
- 22 Den
- 24 Hertz rival
- 25 As one
- 29 Mal de —
- 30 Rustic home
- 31 Conductor de Waart
- 32 Fellow churchgoers
- 34 Long tale
- 35 Gang member
- 36 Not so narrow
- 37 Bow missile
- 40 Crazy
- 41 Bruin
- 42 Simple runway
- 46 Second letter
- 47 Feed the hogs
- 48 Bachelorette's final answer?
- 49 Emcee Trebek
- 50 European range
- 51 Peace, to the Pope

DOWN

- 1 Lustrous black
- 2 Rowing need
- 3 Alarm trigger of a sort
- 4 Lounges
- 5 Sheltered
- 6 Profit
- 7 Two, in Tijuana
- 8 Abandon
- 9 Oodles
- 10 Faction
- 11 Get wind of
- 16 Clique members
- 19 Carriage
- 20 Door-frame piece
- 21 Finished
- 22 Like one's ears
- 23 Not "fer"
- 25 Poi base
- 26 Intellectually stimulating act
- 27 Advantage
- 28 Bellow
- 30 Food
- 33 Insect's middle
- 34 Winnow
- 36 Bees' nastier kin
- 37 "Mamma Mia" inspiration
- 38 Stagger
- 39 Assess
- 40 Fall
- 42 Smile center
- 43 Poorly
- 44 Mrs. McKinley
- 45 Chicken —

Answer to Previous Puzzle



7-25

CRYPTOQUIP

KVKEMFY WUSBVQ HIFSEYUPL
F BVEKMI VH RFLIYUPL
HFQUMD QIQJIYW: "TVR U
JIS DVEY JYVSTIY."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE COMPETITORS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY FINISHED THAT VERY LONG SLED DOG RACE. MUSHING ACCOMPLISHED!

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals F

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Ernie Gates

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OPINION

NATO's weaknesses are in full view

By RICHARD PARKER

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine has claimed yet another casualty: the NATO alliance. Most assuredly the human costs — the loss of 298 lives in the shootdown of the Malaysia Airlines flight, on top of nearly 500 Ukrainians killed since April alone — are the real tragedies of Ukraine's national turmoil now turned into geopolitical struggle. But tragedy comes with strategic costs, too: Ukraine's loss of Crimea, a Russian economy battered increasingly by Western sanctions.

Among these now is the credibility of the NATO alliance. Having just turned 65, NATO is conspicuously absent from this latest turn of events, despite the loss of hundreds of lives from member nations. This may be a display of subtle diplomacy — certainly a better alternative than war — but it undercuts the credibility of the world's most successful political and military alliance, too.

Contrary to public opinion, unfortunately, military shootdowns of civilian aircraft are horrendously common. Since 1950 there have been some 20; on average that is one every three years or so. China, the old Soviet Union, the United States, France, Israel and Ukraine itself have been implicated in those shootdowns either immediately or years later, as have irregular forces from Africa to Georgia to Sri Lanka.

The blame is usually a messy mix of excuses gone awry, mistaken targeting in combat or quite purposeful mass murder. Often, militaries will deny responsibility despite overwhelming evidence. Usually, the nation that lost the airliner will back away from confrontation because

incidents are just awful military mistakes. And no such incident in the last 60-plus years brought an entire alliance nose-to-nose with an adversary — except perhaps the destruction of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 in 1983. That is, until now.

The expansion of the NATO alliance nearly to all of Russia's western borders has provided an important backdrop in the struggle over Ukraine, which made a bid for membership only to drop it a few years ago. The Putin government in Moscow continues to fan the flame of fear over Ukraine and effectively divides the country in two, with Russian Crimea in one hand and separatist pro-Russia eastern Ukraine in the other.

Now, the shootdown of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 has killed not just 298 individuals — but more than 200 citizens of NATO nations, including Belgium, Canada, Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands. If the shootdown was a purposeful act — either by Ukrainian separatists or Russian forces — NATO could easily invoke its core founding principle: Article 5 of its charter, which provides for collective defense, meaning that an attack on any member is an attack on all.

In doing so, for example, the alliance could impose and enforce a no-fly zone over eastern Ukraine. Alliance aircraft could search out and destroy illegal surface-to-air missile sites not only in self-defense but in the name of preserving security in Europe — even if the shootdown was not purposeful. This may sound radical but it's not; there is plenty of precedent. NATO invoked Article 5 after 9/11 to join the American invasion of Afghanistan. And NATO has gone beyond collective defense to collective security in military operations in

Bosnia, Kosovo and, most recently, Libya. Yet this time the alliance is remaining curiously silent. It is the dog that doesn't bark, leaving individual member nations to take their own individual actions.

There is probably a very sound reason: NATO action on the Russian periphery, however they might be justified, would provoke a Russian military response. The unwillingness of the alliance to even risk such a response strongly suggests it would have difficulty in really fulfilling Article 5 and defending, say, Poland and the Baltics. It is already clear that the alliance has not transformed some new member militaries into effective, integrated fighting forces.

People may wonder why the United States hasn't taken a stronger line against Russia over Ukraine. This is why. The Putin government has determined that what happens in Ukraine, a day's drive from Moscow, is of vital, strategic importance. The United States and its allies have determined that it is not. President Barack Obama himself quashed the idea of an American military response immediately after the shootdown. It was a prudent decision, not unlike Ronald Reagan's after the shoot-down of KAL 007.

But in this case there is collateral damage to the world's most successful alliance. It has never been bigger nor have its missions ever been more ambitious. And yet it is paralyzed, incapable of playing any role in a crisis right on its European doorstep. Whether the wounding of NATO's credibility is merely grave or mortal has yet to be seen. But it will not go unnoticed in Moscow, and elsewhere.

Journalist Richard Parker's writing has appeared in the opinion sections of The New York Times, the Columbia Journalism Review, The New Republic and elsewhere.

Political realities can also take hostages

By MARTIN SCHRAM

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

We live in a world of populations held hostage.

We are not talking here about unfortunate captives who are held hostage by rogues, thugs and tyrants. We are talking about the many millions who are being held hostage by their own failures.

Yes, we are talking about elected leaders. But we are also talking about ordinary citizens and corporate leaders who sit passively by and fail to demand that their elected leaders do the right thing. And mainly, we are talking about people everywhere who fail to demand what they know, deep down, is in the best interest of their families and fellow citizens.

In short, today we are talking to the people everywhere who end up holding themselves hostage — but who probably don't even realize they have become their own worst enemies.

Think about the sad lives of the Palestinians of Gaza. They have for some time allowed themselves to be turned into cannon fodder by the Hamas leaders they once elected but no longer trust to lead them. According to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a credible poll in June showed 70 percent of Gaza Palestinians wanted Hamas to sign a cease-fire. Now ask: What do those Palestinian civilians think when Hamas installs rocket launchers in their homes, schools and hospitals? Surely they know why Hamas puts the rockets there — so Israel will kill civilians when it retaliates after the rockets are fired, and Hamas can use that as a public

relations weapon.

Gaza's Palestinians have become hostages of their leaders — and Hamas uses their women, children and infants as mere PR fodder.

Now think about people with a very different predicament — they live in a huge country but are trapped in a bipolar political existence. Russia's 143 million people live in what they call a capitalist democracy and yearn for the prosperity of being a major player in the global economy.

At first, President Vladimir Putin seemed to have schemed to make 2014 the year Russia would be swept into the global economy — via Putin's own clever Sochi two-step: First by hosting Sochi's Winter Olympics, then hosting in Sochi a G-8 economic summit. All to showcase Russia as an ideal place for global investment.

But then, Putin became embarrassed when Ukraine chose closer ties with Europe — and reverted to his KGB ways. He took Crimea, and armed and trained pro-Russia separatist thugs to capture more of Ukraine. All that shattered Russia's economic dreams.

Yet the Russian people rewarded Putin with stratospheric ratings in polls. He made them feel powerful again, albeit still poor. Russians are desperate to realize that they were holding themselves hostage.

Then one of Russia's ground-to-air missiles, fired from rebel-held land, blasted a Malaysia Airlines jetliner out of the sky, murdering 298 innocent civilians, most of them from the Netherlands.

And that brings us to one last population that is endangering its self-interests by holding itself hostage: Europe. The European Union has timidly refrained from

imposing tough sanctions against Russia. The world knows why: Europe, especially Germany, depends upon Russia for much of its natural gas and has many other trade ties.

Even this week, EU foreign ministers met in Brussels but failed to get through. They just chose to consider a modestly expanded list of sanctions.

Europe's shame could be seen as a retreat inside its own protective Shell — in this case, Shell Oil, the huge Dutch-British oil company. Shell has vast gas investments in Russia's Siberia. And the fact that 193 Dutch citizens (including four Shell employees) were blown out of the sky by that Russian missile didn't cause Shell to end its opposition to further sanctions.

This was a time when the world would have benefited from leadership in the form of speeches and initiatives from President Barack Obama geared toward a global commitment toward helping Europe end all dealings with Russia.

Yet the toughest words last week came from British Prime Minister David Cameron. In a commentary in the Sunday Times, Cameron called on the EU to finally take action against Russia.

Cameron wrote that "we sometimes behave as if we need Russia more than Russia needs us."

Europeans must stop holding themselves hostage to Russia's gas pipelines. They can start by shutting off Russia's pipelines — until the Kremlin rejoins the civilized world.

Martin Schram, a McClatchy-Tribune op-ed columnist, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

State, federal exchanges same

The Washington Post

First blame Congress. Generally a useful rule these days, it certainly holds when considering Tuesday's worrying, though possibly temporary, setback for the Affordable Care Act in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Blame Democrats who pressed through a bill containing contradictory language. Blame Republicans who, in their drive for full repeal, have declined to fix the ambiguities and unintended consequences that turn up in any sizeable piece of legislation.

Blame the District of Columbia Circuit, too, for an unwise and unnecessary ruling that would dismantle much of the Affordable Care Act system that has been slowly taking hold. The court would have us believe that the law's text is so clear that it requires a bizarre, counter-productive result. In fact, on the point in question, the text is a vague mess and the court's interpretation of the language is at odds with the law's obvious intent and with normal deference to executive interpretation—as the Fourth Circuit more sensibly ruled at almost the same moment.

The dispute concerns who is eligible for federal subsidies to buy private health care insurance. People in states that set up their own marketplaces buy insurance there. In states that chose not to establish marketplaces, people purchase coverage on marketplaces the federal government created. The Obama administration claims that, whether you are buying on a state or federal exchange, you should be eligible for federal tax credits if your income is below defined limits. Opponents of the law contend that its text bars the people buying on federal exchanges from getting the tax credits. If the opponents' view prevails, some 5 million people currently taking government assistance and millions more who would qualify in the future would lose their eligibility for federal help. Coverage again would be unaffordable for many, and fledgling insurance markets all over the country would collapse.

Typically, federal agencies get wide leeway in interpreting laws, except when the law is so unambiguous that the administration's interpretation can't be sustained. The D.C. Circuit concluded that a reference to exchanges "established by the state[s]" is so clear that it had no choice but to bar subsidies in the 36 federal-marketplace states. But shortly after the D.C. Circuit ruled, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit disagreed strongly in a near-identical case, noting several other provisions in the law that point to a much more sensible interpretation: that federal tax credits should be widely available.

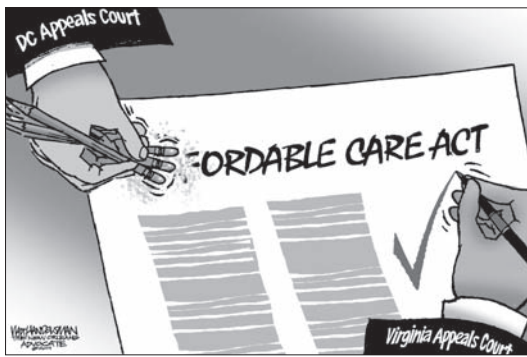
Given the contradictions, the administration's interpretation deserves deference. That is particularly true because the administration's reading accords with the law's obvious intent: to offer affordable health care coverage to a large number of Americans.

'Stand your ground' misused

The Tampa (Fla.) Tribune

Florida's "lawful gun carry" and "stand your ground" laws continue to be a source of refuge for people who may not be deserving of its protections.

Recently, the Florida Supreme Court allowed an appellate court decision involving a "stand your ground" defense to stand. The result: A man who shot and killed two unarmed people never had a jury



of his peers. And this month, an appellate court in Palm Beach County decided a convicted felon illegally in possession of a firearm could use "stand your ground" as a defense after shooting another man during an altercation. District judges really intend the law's self-defense protections to be interpreted so broadly?

These cases are the latest examples of how the 2005 law continues to vex the police and prosecutors who investigate the circumstances surrounding cases involving violent disputes. Under the law, the investigators must await a preliminary judgment about guilt or innocence before a trial is ever held.

As we've said before, "stand your ground" as a concept is laudable. People who fear for their lives through no fault of their own shouldn't be prosecuted. But that was already the rule of law, and the "stand your ground" law eliminates any duty to retreat, which is enabling people who choose to participate in violent disputes to end them by using lethal force.

Lawmakers should put aside their transience on this issue and make the necessary tweaks that will eliminate the confusion and the abuses. But that hardly seems likely. In fact, lawmakers this past session passed a bad law that expands the rights of people to fire warning shots, putting innocent bystanders at risk. It also keeps the records of some "stand your ground" cases from public view.

It's doubtful lawmakers had the rights of convicted felons on their minds when they passed "stand your ground." But the legislation may very well result in the Supreme Court enshrining the rights of convicted felons to use a firearm they can't legally possess in self-defense.

These are the kind of convoluted legal questions that will continue to arise until the law is fixed.

Arming teachers goes too far

(Jefferson City, Mo.) News Tribune

Arming teachers to respond to deadly attacks is an unsettling concept.

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon on July 14 vetoed legislation that would permit educators who specifically are trained for armed response to carry concealed weapons.

We understand and appreciate the motivation for the legislation. Massacres in the schools, although rare, are a grim reality. We support exploring ways to prevent violence or, failing that, to limit its scope, not only in schools, but in all venues — workplaces, movie theaters, etc. — where massacres have occurred.

Supporters of the bill contend students' lives could be saved by the more rapid response offered by trained, armed teachers. We have no quarrel with that theory. But theory does not necessarily translate effectively into the reality of an adrenalin-fueled, bloody gun battle.

Law enforcement officers — who serve

as resource officers in many of our schools — train regularly and rigorously to assess and respond to the violent episodes. Under stressful situations, they must evaluate a range of unknowns regarding the number of assailants, the location and safety of potential victims, and the most effective way to intercede.

Teachers are trained to educate. Even if teachers have background and experience handling firearms, can and should they be placed in situations where they must make life-and-death decisions?

In his veto message, Nixon said: "I have supported and will continue to support the use of duly authorized law enforcement officers employed as school resource officers, but I cannot condone putting firearms in the hands of educators who should be focused on teaching our kids."

We agree. In our capacity as journalists, we have interacted with countless educators over the years. We have the utmost respect for their professionalism, dedication and compassion for their students.

Their job is teaching, and teaching must not and should not place them in a position where they must ask themselves if this is the moment when they will kill another human being.

Add digital assets to estates

The Oregonian

Dying in the digital age means leaving two worlds instead of one.

One is the physical world, where your body resides. The other is the online world, where your virtual self exists. When you die, your loved ones become responsible for both — yet they have very few tools to take proper care of the online "you."

This is a growing problem nationally and in Oregon, as older citizens become more Internet-savvy and people of all ages conduct more of their personal and financial business online. Oregon lawmakers should be prepared to tackle this issue in 2015, with help from privacy advocates and estate attorneys. Our laws are ill-equipped to deal with the tricky reality of gaining access to others' Facebook accounts, family photos stored in the cloud, and even password-protected phones.

Last week, a leading group of lawyers recommended that states adopt several proposals to make it easier for surviving family members and executors of estates to gain access to their digital assets when you die. This group, known as the Uniform Law Commission, says electronic documents should be treated much like paper documents in a file cabinet. In most cases, a surviving loved one or executor should get easy access without having to petition a judge or jump through months of hoops.

Same goes for photos and files that might be stored online. Unless the person specifies otherwise in a will, trust or user opt-in agreement, that person's digital assets

should be as accessible as their physical property, the group says.

"Technology is creating these assets on a daily basis, and the law is woefully behind," said former state lawmaker Lane Shetterly, an Oregon attorney who served on the workgroup that hammered out the recommendations. The group's intent is to establish good public policy around better access, he explained, while also carving out ways for people to protect their online privacy, even in death.

"This is a balancing act," Shetterly told The Oregonian editorial board Tuesday.

Digital privacy is emerging as a hot topic for the 2015 legislative session, and dealing with the digital assets of a deceased person is likely to be part of the mix. Oregon lawmakers may be surprised to discover that many of the same Internet companies that seem awfully casual about users' privacy are often the most reluctant to share account information with surviving loved ones, both because of company policies and competing federal laws.

Oregonians may find themselves debating surreal questions such as: How can we keep a virtual self out of legal purgatory? How would we define a good digital death?

This would have sounded like gibberish five years ago. Now it's a matter of extension of living with our heads — and a good part of our souls — in the digital cloud.

Let innovation flow on water

Omaha (Neb.) World-Herald

It's no surprise that a large portion of venture capital goes toward the "cool" stuff. Stuff such as phone apps that help people improve the way they do social networking, order pizza or keep up with Hollywood celebrities.

That's fine, but it's encouraging to read in Modern Farmer magazine that some investors are turning their attention to supporting innovative ideas for efficient water use.

Technology that promotes prudent use of this essential resource for agriculture and other non-food uses isn't sold so much to some, but that is just the type of scientific advancement 21st-century agriculture needs. At present, less than 1 percent of U.S. venture capital goes toward water-efficiency breakthroughs.

Reporting by Circle of Blue, a research/journalist group that studies water issues, recently pointed out a key reason why the world needs technological innovation on water needs:

"Aquifers that nourish some of the richest farmland and the largest countries are under stress. Aquifers in California's Central Valley, India's Ganges Plain, the grasslands of northern China and the Arabian Peninsula are all shrinking."

Water scarcity has dramatically reduced cattle numbers in the southern Plains and spurred the state government in Kansas to rework its water laws and begin a process for crafting a 50-year statewide water plan.

Kansas — which leads the nation with 8.3 million acres in irrigation — a state water task force this year developed legislation that's launched a statewide collaboration to strengthen water sustainability.

Meanwhile, the ongoing drought in California is projected to spur the state to let 800,000 acres lie fallow this year due to water shortages. The catastrophic drought has spurred some Bay Area investors to begin putting money into new ideas for water sustainability.

This issue relates directly to the University of Nebraska's Daugherty Water for Food Institute, which is holding a symposium for October. The annual event attracts water experts from around the world.

Development of water-efficiency technology may never be considered as cool as phone apps, but in a world facing growing water and food challenges, such investment is critical for urban and rural folks alike.

SPORTS BRIEFS/TOUR DE FRANCE

Briefly

Free agent Tucker re-signs with Suns

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Phoenix Suns re-signed forward P.J. Tucker to a multiyear contract Wednesday.

Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Tucker started 81 games last season in his second year with the Suns, averaging career highs of 9.4 points, 6.5 rebounds, 1.7 assists, 1.4 steals and 30.7 minutes.

The former University of Texas player spent his rookie season with Toronto in 2006-07, then played in Germany, Puerto Rico, Italy, Greece, Israel and the Ukraine before joining the Suns.

"P.J. is one of the most rugged competitors in the entire league," Suns general manager Ryan McDonough said in a statement released by the team. "We love his passion and his fire. We are happy that he will remain in a Suns uniform for the foreseeable future."

In other NBA news:

■ The Charlotte Hornets have signed free agent point guard Brian Roberts, who spent the last two seasons with the Pelicans. He is expected to back up Kemba Walker this season.

■ The Dallas Mavericks have reached a deal with free-agent forward Al-Farouq Aminu after scrapping a contract with Rashard Lewis because of a knee problem.

Djalo leads Earthquakes to MLS win over Fire

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Portuguese forward Yannick Djalo scored one goal and had a hand in three others to lead the San Jose Earthquakes to a 5-1 win over the Chicago Fire in Major League Soccer on Wednesday.

In other MLS news:

■ Former English star Frank Lampard is joining the New York City FC, the expansion team's second high-profile international signing leading to its first season in 2015. The club affiliated with the Premier League's Manchester City and the New York Yankees previously signed Spain star David Villa.

Texas players charged with sex assault

AUSTIN, Texas — A University of Texas police spokeswoman says two Longhorns football players have been charged with felony

sexual assault and their arrests are pending.

Spokeswoman Cindy Posey says the players charged Thursday are wide receivers Kendall Sanders and Montrel Meander. Sanders also faces a charge of improper photography.

Sanders, a junior, has played in 23 career games and started seven last year. He has 39 career catches for 376 yards and a touchdown. Sanders was suspended for the 2013 season opener after a drunken driving arrest.

In other college football news:

■ The University of Georgia announced Wednesday that sophomore defensive lineman Jonathan Taylor has been dismissed from the team following his arrest on aggravated assault and family violence charges.

■ Oregon has been picked to win the Pac-12 football title in a preseason media poll for the fourth time in the past five years. UCLA also is favored to reach the league title game in the poll released Wednesday.

The Ducks are the media's favorite for the third straight season, getting 37 of 39 first-place votes in the North Division balloting. Oregon also received 24 votes to win the league title game in Santa Clara, Calif., on Dec. 5.

■ Defending champion Bowling Green is the favorite to win this season's Mid-American Conference title. A poll of media members who cover the conference picked the Falcons to finish ahead of Akron in the East and defeat projected West champ Toledo in the MAC title game in December.

Rangers, Kreider avoid arbitration with deal

NEW YORK — Chris Kreider and the New York Rangers agreed on a two-year, \$4.95 million deal shortly before going to arbitration. For the second straight day, the Rangers avoided arbitration with a restricted free-agent forward. On Tuesday, Mats Zuccarelli agreed to a one-year, \$3.5 million deal.

In other NHL news:

■ The Buffalo Sabres signed defenseman Andre Benoit to a one-year contract Wednesday.

■ The Colorado Avalanche has avoided arbitration with Lady Byng Trophy winner Ryan O'Reilly by signing the versatile forward to a two-year deal.



PETER DEJONG/AP

Italy's Vincenzo Nibali crosses the finish line to win the 18th stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 90.4 miles from Pau to Hautacam, Pyrenees region, France, on Thursday.

Nibali closing in on title

Italian wins final mountain stage to all but seal Tour victory

BY JAMEY KEATEN
The Associated Press

ARGELES-GAZOST, France — Vincenzo Nibali crushed everyone on the last mountain leg of the Tour de France on Thursday, all but ensuring he will be crowned champion when the race ends in Paris in three days.

On the last big climb of Stage 18, the Italian broke out of the peloton, chased down breakaway riders, and rode solo in front for the last five miles uphill.

Nibali, who captured his fourth stage of the Tour, stuck out his tongue, tapped his chest, and raised a fist skyward as he finished the 90-mile leg more than a minute ahead of Thibaut Pinot of France, who was second. Rafal Majka of Poland, in third, was another two seconds back.

The remarkable effort by Nibali, who was on track to become the first Italian to win the Tour since Marco Pantani in 1998, essentially made the real race



CHRISTOPHE ENA/AP

Astana team manager Alexander Vinkovurov, right, and stage winner Vincenzo Nibali of Italy, left, celebrate after the 18th stage of the Tour de France on Thursday. Nibali is the overall leader by more than 7 minutes.

drama about who will join him on the podium on the Champs-Ely-

sees on Sunday.

With three stages left, Friday's is mostly flat and unlikely to allow a breakaway rider to gain time. The last real challenge will be Saturday's individual time trial, but Nibali's lead is so big — 7:10 ahead of Pinot and 7:23 ahead of France's Jean-Christophe Péraud — that it would take a disaster for him to lose the yellow jersey before Sunday.

The race for second heated up. Alejandro Valverde of Spain lost crucial seconds on the last climb and fell from second overall to fourth. But he is considered the strongest time-trial rider among the three main aspirants for the podium, including Pinot and Péraud.

After setting off from Pau, riders tackled the famed Tourmalet pass — the highest Pyrenean peak on this Tour — before heading up to Hautacam ski station. Both climbs are among the toughest in professional cycling.

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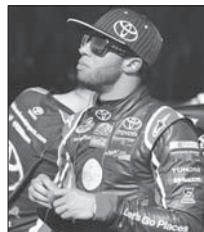


“You get a real understanding of what’s going on behind the scenes, how they train and how they prepare, and what the commitment is all about.”

Dale Earnhardt Jr.
NASCAR driver

DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt Jr., who has a sponsorship deal with the National Guard along with IndyCar racer Graham Rahal, prepares to load a shell into an M119 Howitzer at Camp Atterbury on Wednesday in Edinburg, Ind.



JEFF SILER, CHARLOTTE OBSERVER/MCT

Darrell Wallace Jr. won his third career race in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series on Wednesday in the Mudsummer Classic on the dirt at Eldora Speedway in Rossville, Ohio.

NASCAR Trucks

Wallace Jr. pulls off Mudsummer Classic win

The Associated Press

ROSSVILLE, Ohio — Darrell Wallace Jr. won the Mudsummer Classic on Wednesday night on the dirt at Eldora Speedway for his second Camping World Truck Series victory of the year.

Wallace took the lead from Kyle Larson on the final restart on the half-mile oval and held on for his third career series victory. He gave Kyle Busch Motorsports its eighth victory in the first 10 races of the season. In addition to Wallace, Busch has won in all five of his starts and Erik Jones also has won for the team.

Toyota also extended its winning streak to 12 races.

“That’s so cool — on the dirt at Eldora,” Wallace said. “Really? Eldora? The coolest things about it is I came into this hoping we’d finish in the top five. I was worried about the Toyota streak, not to lie.”

Larson hit the outside wall after giving up the lead, finally damaging his truck so much that he slowed to a crawl and stopped well before the finish line.

“Thanks to Turner Scott Motorsports for building a strong truck to make it last that long,” Larson said. “Didn’t realize how stupid I was driving. Darrell did a really good job. He was fast all day today and he ran close to the wall the whole time and never really hit it.”

Ron Hornaday took advantage of Larson’s problems to finish second. Ryan Blaney was third, followed by Ken Schrader, Ty Dillon, John Hunter Nemechek, Jeb Burton, Johnny Sauter, Matt Crafton and Austin Dillon.

Wallace led 97 of 150 laps in NASCAR’s lone dirt race in its top three series.

The 20-year-old Wallace won last year at Martinsville to join Wendell Scott as the only black winners on NASCAR’s national level, and took the race at Gateway last month.

Racers get inside look at Guard

Troops entertain NASCAR’s Earnhardt Jr., IndyCar’s Rahal at Indiana camp

By JIM JOHNSON
The Associated Press

EDINBURGH, Ind.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Graham Rahal are used to occasional fire-works when drivers get upset at the track.

They saw the real thing Wednesday visiting Indiana National Guard troops at Camp Atterbury. They got an up-close look at some of the weapons and explosives used and they honored soldiers who recently committed to the National Guard and others who served in Afghanistan. The two drivers are sponsored by the National Guard, and they loved every moment.

“Oh yeah, they’re entertaining us,” Rahal said after setting off an explosive so big that mud and clay landed nearly 300 yards from the detonation site. “We’re not entertaining them. They’re the experts, we’re learning from them. It’s very cool, very unique.”

Nearly 4,000 troops are in the middle of training at the camp 45 miles south of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, where Earnhardt will compete at the Brickyard this weekend.

He and Rahal, an IndyCar driver, were scheduled to fly to the camp on a Blackhawk helicopter, but thunderstorms altered the plan.

The drivers’ first stop was with a brigade out of Evansville, where Earnhardt and Rahal fired a big Howitzer.

“Most of the time when we’re out here shooting, we don’t see anyone out here,” said Matthew Gumbel, who instructed the two drivers on how to fire the weapon. “It’s great for the



DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

IndyCar driver Graham Rahal fires an M4 Rifle with National Guard troops at Camp Atterbury on Wednesday in Edinburg, Ind.

spirits of the soldiers.”

After taking a couple of shots, Earnhardt and Rahal presented the new recruits with replica cars. Earnhardt gave the brigade a signed car hood and Rahal presented a fire suit and Earnhardt swore in six soldiers who recently committed six years to the National Guard.

“That was really overwhelming because I’m sure that opportunity will never come again,” the Daytona 500 winner said. “That was really a unique experience. I had them sign the (script) so I will never forget it.”

The drivers recognized soldiers from the 713th Engineer Company, where they detonated explosives, and did a question-and-answer session before honoring soldiers from the 219th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade.

Earnhardt and Rahal left the base in the Blackhawk helicopter.

“It never gets old being able to come out here and see these guys in their environment,” Earnhardt said. “You get a real understanding of what’s going on behind the scenes, how they train and how they prepare, and what the commitment is all about.”

NFL

Skins' coach Gruden tackles first camp



Nick Wass/AP

Washington Redskins head coach Jay Gruden takes part in a drill with running back Roy Helu Jr., left, during minicamp in Ashburn, Va. After years of waiting for his turn, and after months of meticulous planning, Jay Gruden begins his first NFL training camp as a head coach as the Redskins reported to their facilities in Richmond, Va., on Wednesday.

First-year head coach excited about season

The Associated Press

The most stressful part for Jay Gruden was setting up the schedule. Sixteen days of Washington Redskins practices and meetings, all on him.

"I tried to use input from everybody," he said.

Gruden takes the field Thursday for his first training camp practice as an NFL head coach, the culmination of a long climb that took him through the AFL and UFL before his final launching pad stop as the offensive coordinator with the Cincinnati Bengals.

"There's anticipation," Gruden said. "You're excited about the season. You're nervous; you've got butterflies walking out there every day."

One player eager to go is franchise quarterback Robert Griffin III, who was limited at last year's camp while recovering from major knee surgery and didn't play in any preseason games. Gruden said Griffin's physical condition is "not an issue" but that Griffin will nevertheless be tested both physically and mentally.

"He's in his third year. He's still going to make mistakes here and there," Gruden said. "But the key for him is to learn from his mistakes and not make the same mistakes over and over."

Camp runs through Aug. 12 and includes three days of workouts with Brady and the New England Patriots. The Redskins are in Richmond for the second consecutive year, but this year's group has been humbled by a 3-13 record that cost coach Mike Shanahan his job.

Another of Gruden's challenges as a newbie head coach is making certain that all the longshots get a fair shake. More than 40 percent of the 90 players in camp won't make the final roster.

"There's nothing worse as a coach," Gruden said, "than when you let somebody go and they go on and kick your (butt) later on."

Briefs

Ravens' RB Rice receives 2-game suspension

The Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice has received a two-game suspension from the NFL following his off-season arrest for domestic violence.

Rice will miss the season opener against AFC North champion Cincinnati on Sept. 7 and the Sept. 11 game on Thursday night against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Rice was arrested following a Feb. 15 altercation in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in which he allegedly struck then-fiancee Janay

Palmer. The 27-year-old Rice has been accepted into a diversion program, which upon completion could lead to the charges being expunged.

Falcons, WR White agree to extension

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — On the eve of training camp, the Atlanta Falcons have agreed to terms on a new contract with receiver Roddy White.

The Falcons announced the four-year extension Thursday. Terms haven't been released.

White holds the team records for career receptions (685) and yards receiving (9,436). But he battled ankle and hamstring injuries last season, missing three games and ending his streak of 133 in a row.

White did end the year on a hot

streak, with 43 catches for 502 yards and two touchdowns over the final five games.

Also:

■ Pro Bowl running back Jamaal Charles has agreed to a two-year contract extension with the Kansas City Chiefs.

The six-year NFL veteran ran for 1,287 yards and 12 touchdowns last year to help the Chiefs reach the playoffs.

Suspended Jaguars WR Blackmon arrested

EDMOND, Okla. — Suspended Jacksonville Jaguars wide receiver Justin Blackmon has been arrested in Oklahoma on a complaint of marijuana possession.

Blackmon, a former standout at Oklahoma State, was arrested Wednesday evening in the Okla-

homa City suburb of Edmond. Police say they noticed his sedan go around stopped traffic in an attempt to get into a turn lane.

Police spokeswoman Jenny Monroe says an officer detected a "heavy smell of marijuana" coming from the car, and that Blackmon admitted he had smoked "a blunt" while driving and had another in his vehicle.

Blackmon is suspended without pay indefinitely for repeated violations of the NFL's substance-abuse policy. The Jaguars have indicated they may cut him if he is reinstated.

Also:

■ The NFL has suspended Jacksonville Jaguars receiver Ace Sanders without pay for the first four games of the season for violating the league's substance-abuse policy.

A second-year pro from South

Carolina, Sanders said he plans to seek counseling and not rehab.

Jerry Jones: Garrett not coaching for his job

OXNARD, Calif. — Jerry Jones doesn't like, to repeat his good sound bites, so he found a new way to say Jason Garrett isn't coaching for his job.

The Dallas Cowboys owner said Wednesday it wasn't a "make-or-break" season for Garrett, a year after opening training camp by declaring that last season wouldn't be "Armageddon" for his coach if the once-proud franchise missed the playoffs again.

The Cowboys have identical endings to all three full seasons under Garrett, losing to NFC East rivals to finish 8-8 and miss the playoffs. Garrett is in the final year of his contract.



Rice

MLB SCOREBOARD

American League	East Division	Central Division	West Division	Totals	National League	East Division	Central Division	West Division	Totals
Baltimore	55	45	.550		Washington	54	47	.535	2.5
New York	53	49	.520	3	Atlanta	56	46	.545	1
Toronto	53	49	.520	3	San Diego	50	50	.500	1
Boston	47	54	.465	8.5	Arizona	44	58	.433	10.5
					Philadelphia	47	53	.470	.8
Detroit	57	45	.561		Milwaukee	57	45	.559	
Cleveland	51	50	.505	.6	Oakland	54	47	.535	2.5
Minnesota	50	50	.500	1	St. Louis	54	47	.535	2.5
Chicago	48	54	.466	11	Chicago	51	49	.505	.6
St. Louis	50	50	.500	1					
San Francisco	56	44	.559						
Pittsburgh	57	45	.561						
Milwaukee	57	45	.559						
Oakland	54	47	.535	2.5					
St. Louis	54	47	.535	2.5					
Chicago	51	49	.505	.6					

MLB

Pence leads Giants over Phillies in ninth

By Aaron Bracy
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA—There are no secrets to Hunter Pence's approach to hitting in crucial situations. His simple strategy worked again.

Pence drove in all of San Francisco's runs with a double in the ninth and Madison Bumgarner pitched eight scoreless innings to lead the Giants to a 3-1 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies on Wednesday night.

"Just go up to compete, try to see the ball and hit the ball," Pence said.

Bumgarner (12-7) gave up five hits while striking out six and walking none in a pitchers' duel with A.J. Burnett.

"It was good to get quick outs tonight," Bumgarner said.

It was the sixth win in seven games for first-place San Francisco, which moved two games ahead of the Los Angeles Dodgers in the NL West. The Giants will look to sweep the four-game series on Thursday.

One night after blowing just his third save in 26 chances, closer Jonathan Papelbon (2-2) took the loss.

The Phillies' offense, which ranks near the bottom of the NL in several categories, managed just seven hits. They lost their fourth straight and seventh of eight.

"It's really been the problem we've had the last three games, stranding guys out there," Philadelphia manager Ryne Sand-



CHRIS SZADOLA/AP

San Francisco's Brandon Crawford, center, celebrates scoring along with Hector Sanchez, left, and Gregor Blanco, right, on the double by the Giants' Hunter Pence during the ninth inning of Wednesday's game in Philadelphia. San Francisco won 3-1.

berg said. "And it came up big tonight."

Pence broke a scoreless tie with a softly hit bloop down the

right-field line off Papelbon on a full count with two outs.

"Pence is the guy you want up there," Giants manager Bruce

Bochy said. "He has the knack of putting the ball in the right place. Pence is amazing. He has so much energy and he's relentless. We're

lucky to have him."

Whether the last two games have an effect on Papelbon's trade prospects remain to be seen. The Philadelphia closer recently has been outspoken about his interest in moving to a contender.

"Whatever happens happens," Papelbon said. "I have no control over it."

He dismissed the notion that his value would be diminished by his last two outings.

"If you were to put the entire season into two games, it would be pretty dumb," he said.

Marlon Byrd drove in Philadelphia's run in the ninth off Santiago Casilla, who converted his seventh save in 10 chances.

The game was delayed for 59 minutes by a thunderstorm. Following resumption in the top of the fourth, the game was played in a persistent drizzle that got heavy at times until the rain finally stopped for good in the eighth inning.

Burnett pitched eight scoreless innings, striking out six, walking four and allowing four hits, in a performance that had to have impressed the scouts seated behind home plate. The right-hander has been a rumored acquisition for contending clubs as the Phillies are looking to sell at the trade deadline to get younger.

Bumgarner and Burnett allowed the relievers to rest following Tuesday's 5-hour, 46-minute marathon in which 16 pitchers were used in the Giants' 9-6, 14-inning victory.

Roundup

Athletics hold off Astros

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, California—Oakland's Yoenis Cespedes homered twice and tied a career high with five RBIs before leaving with an apparent right thumb injury in the A's 9-7 win over Houston.

Cespedes hit a three-run homer in the second inning and a two-run shot in the fourth off Brad Peacock (3-7), his 15th and 16th this season.

Cespedes was replaced in left field with Oakland leading 8-1 in the seventh. But the Astros almost pulled off an improbable comeback, scoring five runs in the eighth before the back of Oakland's bullpen shut them down.

Jesse Chavez (8-6) allowed two runs and four hits in 5½ innings to help the A's (62-38) extend the best record in baseball. He struck out seven and walked two.

Rockies 6, White Sox 1: Mike Moustakas scored the tiebreaking run in the top of the ninth inning when opposing catcher Tyler Flowers couldn't handle a throw home, as visiting Kansas City beat Chicago in the rubber game of a three-game series.

Moustakas triggered the decisive rally with a lead-off single off Zach Putnam (3-2), the last of four White Sox pitchers.

Rockies 6, Nationals 4: Jorge De La Rosa struck out a season-high 11 as he pitched efficiently into the eighth inning and his team's wobbly bullpen held off Washington's late rally, helping host Colorado snap a seven-game skid.

De La Rosa (11-6) was one strikeout away from matching his career high set in 2009. The hard-throwing lefty allowed two runs — one earned — before being lifted for a reliever with one out in the eighth.

Brewers 5, Reds 1: Mark Reynolds homered twice as Milwaukee completed a three-game sweep of visiting Cincinnati.

Kyle Lohse pitched 6½ innings to hand the Reds their sixth straight loss since the All-Star break.

Yankees 2, Rangers 1 (5 innings): Brett Gardner hit a tie-breaking homer off All-Star ace Yu Darvish as host New York won the rain-shortened game called in the fifth inning under bizarre circumstances.

David Phelps (5-4) pitched out of a jam just before the storm, and Francisco Cervelli doubled twice to help the Yankees win for the fifth time in six games on a 10-game homestand.

Pirates 6, Dodgers 1: Josh Harrison had two hits with two RBIs as host Pittsburgh jumped on Dan Haren early in the win.

Tigers 11, Diamondbacks 5: Miguel Cabrera hit a three-run homer and Austin Jackson had a three-run double as visiting Detroit wore out Arizona in a slugfest.

Twins 3, Indians 1: Anthony Swarzak pitched five sharp innings in a fill-in start and Oswaldo Arcia homered as host Minnesota beat Cleveland.

Blue Jays 6, Red Sox 4: Jose Bautista homered and drove in two runs, and R.A. Dickey won for the first time in three starts for host Toronto.

Braves 6, Marlins 1: Freddie Freeman hit a three-run homer and Ervin Santana won his second straight start for Atlanta.

Padres 8, Cubs 3: Tommy Medica hit a go-ahead RBI double in the fifth inning and Ian Kennedy pitched six strong innings for visiting San Diego.

Angels 3, Orioles 2: Kole Calhoun drew a bases-loaded walk from reliever Brian Matusz in the eighth inning after a tying RBI double by Erick Aybar for host Los Angeles.



AP photo

Athletics relief pitcher Sean Doolittle celebrates after recording the last out of the game Wednesday against the Houston Astros in Oakland, Calif. Oakland won 9-7.

MLB

41-year-old Colon overpowers Mariners

Cano breaks up perfect game in 7th inning of Mets' victory

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Bartolo Colon watched the line drive fall into the outfield grass and applauded. It was all Colon could do after his attempt to toss the first perfect game in New York Mets history was thwarted.

Colon came within seven outs of a perfect game on Wednesday afternoon, before giving up a two-out single to Robinson Cano in the seventh inning of the Mets' 3-2 win over the Mariners.

Colon left a 2-2 fastball elevated on the outer half of the plate and Cano served the pitch into left field, dropping it well in front of Eric Young Jr.

"You're a little disappointed when they get a hit, but that's what they're trying to do," Colon said through an interpreter. "They're trying to get a hit and break up the no-hitter."

New York manager Terry Collins went one step further than disappointment. He was certain if Colon was able to get Cano to finish off the seventh he would have completed the perfect game. Collins was the Mets manager when Johan Santana ended New York's franchise drought without a no-hitter in 2012.

"No doubt. There is no doubt in my mind that if he got by Cano he rams it up. You see it a lot," Collins said. "But you know, great

game by him."

A no-hitter is one of the few things missing from Colon's résumé. He has a Cy Young. He's won a World Series title. He's made a career comeback after injuries left him out of baseball in 2010.

At age 41, Colon is pitching well enough that he's regularly being talked about as trade fodder for teams needing a starter with the non-waiver trade deadline rapidly approaching.

"I don't know anything about that," Colon said. "Those are decisions for the upper management and you can't control that stuff."

Colon retired the first 20 batters he faced before Cano's single. Colon then had to hold on as Seattle rallied in the eighth and came within inches of tying the game on Brad Miller's RBI double that hit off the top of the wall.

Colon (9-8) improved to 13-1 all-time at Safeco Field, including his dominance of the Mariners when he was pitching for the Angels. Seattle had no answers for the rotund right-hander, who gave up two runs and three hits in 7½ innings.

"He was a Cy Young class guy," Cano said. "He knows how to pitch. Back in the day when the guy threw hard, everything was middle of the plate, fastball. Now you see a different guy that moves the ball, both sides, and a



New York pitcher Bartolo Colon had a perfect game into the seventh inning as the Mets beat the Seattle Mariners 3-2 on Wednesday at Safeco Field in Seattle.

pretty good change-up."

Colon threw a one-hitter for the Angels against the Yankees in 2000 and was cruising until the seventh. He got the first two outs of the seventh, but Cano's single ended the bid for perfection. Cano was hitting .400 against Colon entering the game.

Corey Hart led off the eighth walking on a 3-2 pitch, just the fourth three-ball count Colon reached. After a fly out, Dustin Ackley singled to right, bringing the tying run to the plate.

Miller nearly tied it with one swing, doubling off the top of the wall in right-center, missing a

Did you know

Johan Santana has thrown the only no-hitter in New York Mets history, beating St. Louis 8-0 on June 1, 2012.



SOURCE: The Associated Press

home run by only a couple of feet. Colon was replaced by Jeurys Familia and Willie Bloomquist's infield groundout scored another, but Endy Chavez struck out to end the threat.

Jenny Mejia got his 13th save pitching the ninth, despite giving up a pair of singles.

"(Colon) was awesome today. Great command of his fastball. We didn't use his off-speed that much," Mets catcher Anthony Recker said. "... It made my job really easy."

Daniel Murphy had an RBI double in the first and David Wright had an RBI single in the seventh. New York also had a score in the fifth when Ruben Tejada was hit in the helmet with a 94 mph fastball from Seattle starter Taijuan Walker.

Tejada instantly crumpled to the ground before walking off the field on his own power. Tejada passed all initial testing and was expected to fly with the team to Milwaukee.

"It scared me," Tejada said.

Rays' Cobb fans 10 in shutout victory over Cards

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Tampa Bay pitcher Alex Cobb threw 10 pitches off the mound on Tuesday and was unhappy.

"It was horrible," Cobb said. "I was not looking forward to coming into tonight."

However, he was very glad he made the start Wednesday night.

Cobb struck out 10 and drove in a run with his first major league hit, leading the Rays to a 3-0 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals, the Rays' seventh straight win.

Cobb (6-6) blanked the Cardinals on five hits over seven innings. It was the fourth time this season he has thrown at least seven innings without an earned run. Cobb missed 50 games last season with a concussion after he was hit near the right ear by a line drive off the bat of Kansas City's Eric Hosmer.

"Tonight was the best I've felt on the mound hands down since I've come back and even before that," Cobb said. "When my mechanics are right, all my pitches play off each other."

St. Louis manager Mike Matheny agreed.

"You could tell right from the top, he had a good split working today," Matheny said. "The guys had trouble laying off it below the zone. Their timing was right on it and it was just disappearing below the bat. He was locked in with it."

Of the three Tampa Bay pitchers were locked in, finishing with 15 strikeouts.

Jake McGee pitched the ninth inning for his ninth save in 10 opportunities.

The Rays have won 25 of their last 36 games and are 13-4 in July. On June 29, they had the worst record in the majors and have passed 11 teams since.

Tampa Bay completed its road trip at 5-0 and its eight-game road winning streak ties the franchise record set twice. The loss was the third straight for the Cardinals.

"We played well. We had a great vibe in the dugout," Tampa Bay manager Joe Maddon said.

St. Louis starter Lance Lynn (11-7) had won three straight and was 4-1 in his last five home starts. He struck out seven and gave up six hits in 6½ innings. Lynn walked three, hit a batter and threw a wild pitch but stranded seven runners in the first five innings.

"I threw the ball well, I just gave up a couple too many with the way he was throwing the ball," Lynn said. "Some nights, you get outpitched."

Tampa Bay pitchers, hitting eighth, drove in the first runs in both games of the short series. On Tuesday, Rays pitcher Jake Odorizzi drove in the first run with a safety squeeze bunt.

Cobb was not to be outdone.

He picked up his first career hit in eight at-bats when he doubled down the first base line with two outs in the second inning to give Tampa Bay a 1-0 lead.

"That was the coolest thing I've done in



Jeff ROBERSON/AP

Tampa Bay Rays pitcher Alex Cobb follows through on an RBI double in the second inning of Wednesday's game against the St. Louis Cardinals at Busch Stadium in St. Louis. Cobb also had 10 strikeouts in seven innings on the mound as Tampa Bay won 3-0.

my big league career," Cobb said. "I was kind of secretly hoping it was going to be a 1-0 win."

In the fourth, Cobb was hit on the right elbow by a fastball.

"Honestly, my initial thought was I had broken my elbow," Cobb said. "I'd never been hit by a 94 mile an hour (pitch) before. Once I got on first base, it wasn't hurting. It was like getting hit on your funny bone."

Maddon was worried.

"I told him I didn't want to miss his bat," Maddon quipped. "I had so many different thoughts. He didn't wince and there no hesitation on his part."

Tampa Bay made it 2-0 in the seventh with an unearned run. After a one-out single by Desmond Jennings, St. Louis second baseman Kolten Wong mishandled a possible double-play grounder to chase Lynn. Randy Choate walked pinch-hitter Brandon Guyer to load the bases. Evan Longoria drove in the run with a sacrifice fly off Seth Maness.

The Rays added a run in the ninth on an RBI single by Guey.

After the first inning Cardinals third base coach Jose Oquendo left two packages of crackers for Tampa Bay catcher Jose Molina on home plate. They were from Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina, who is on the disabled list with torn ligaments in his right thumb.

Rays shortstop Yunel Escobar was ejected in the fourth inning. Escobar, who was leading off, vehemently argued with home plate umpire Dan Bellino, who called him out on a 3-2 pitch. Logan Forsythe replaced Escobar and played second base with Ben Zobrist moving to shortstop.

MLB



JULIAN H. GONZALEZ, DETROIT FREE PRESS/MCT

Tigers reliever Joba Chamberlain, left, pretends to try to kiss teammate Ian Kinsler as they clown around for the fans during the annual on-field photo day in Detroit on June 8. Chamberlain has thrived in the more relaxed environment in Detroit after being limited to 45 games last year with the Yankees.

Letting: Chamberlain thriving with less restrictive environment in Detroit

FROM BACK PAGE

"Every time he comes into the game, I feel like he goes 1-2-3 pretty easily," teammate Drew Smyly said after earning the win against the second-place Indians. "He's been pretty amazing. I don't know if he's had one bad game all season. That's hard to do out of the bullpen when you're pitching the eighth inning every game."

The Tigers hoped Chamberlain would bolster their bullpen when they signed the former New York Yankees player to a one-year, \$2.5 million contract. With a new team and no rules about facial hair to worry about, he has been letting his beard grow for six-plus months.

"I save a lot of money on razors," Chamberlain joked. "And, spend a little bit more on shampoo and conditioner."

Chamberlain has pitched so well, and so often, he earned \$200,000 for pitching in a 35th and 40th game. He'll pick up another \$100,000 for pitching twice this week, and he can keep the checks coming by appearing in a 50th and 55th game.

In his seventh season with the Yankees last year, he was limited to 45 games because of a strained right oblique and perhaps because he was not a trusted option with a career-high 4.93 ERA. The previous two years, he pitched in a total of 49 games because of right elbow and right ankle operations.

Now, Chamberlain is relatively healthy — saying he deals with "stiffness" in his ankle

— and very happy.

"It's a great fit all around," Chamberlain said. "I faced these guys enough. I'm just glad I don't have to face them anymore."

Chamberlain came into the majors with a bang, averaging more than a strikeout per inning in 2007 as a reliever and in 2008 as a pitcher who took turns in the rotation and was used out of the bullpen. After going 9-6 in 31 starts in 2009, he pitched a career-high 73 games the next year as a reliever.

Injuries, though, took a toll and led to his departure from the Yankees and an opportunity in Detroit.

"I knew what I was capable of," Chamberlain said, shrugging off any sense of surprise at his comeback.

"I've had the opportunity to pitch in every situation in baseball, as a starter as a reliever and everything in between. I knew I had to prove it in spring training, get better and go from there."

'I knew what I was capable of.'

Joba Chamberlain
Detroit Tigers reliever

CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Tigers get closer Soria from Texas

Last-place Rangers trade for young pitching prospects Knebel, Thompson

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The first-place Detroit Tigers reinforced the back end of their shaky bullpen Wednesday night, acquiring closer Joakim Soria from the Texas Rangers for pitching prospects Corey Knebel and Jake Thompson.

The trade was completed during Texas' rain-shortened 2-1 loss to the New York Yankees. Soria said he was informed of the pending deal during the delay, and the Rangers announced the move after the game.

By the time Soria spoke to reporters in the clubhouse, all his Rangers jerseys had been removed from his locker.

"I'm going to a new team. It's going to be my new family. I'm going to do whatever they want me to do," Soria said. "I just want to help them win the World Series. That's what it's all about, and I hope I can help out as much as I can."

Soria is 1-3 with a 2.70 ERA and 17 saves in 19 chances during his first full season since 2011. Detroit has been looking to upgrade a relief corps that ranked 12th out of 15 American League teams with a 4.37 ERA.

"It's a great team. It's a contending team," said Soria, a two-time All-Star with Kansas City. "I'm going to talk to them and see what's going on when I get there. I know they're going to Anaheim, so I'll probably go there."

Soria moves from the last-place Rangers to the AL Central-leading Tigers and gets reunited with Joe Nathan, the closer he replaced in Texas this season. Nathan, who was with the Rangers from 2012-

13, has a 5.89 ERA and 20 saves in 25 tries this year for Detroit.

Texas signed Soria to an \$8 million, two-year contract before last season as he was recovering from his second Tommy John surgery. The deal included a \$7 million club option for 2015 with a \$500,000 buyout.

"I'm very grateful to this organization. They helped me a lot when I was hurt," Soria said. "They picked me up and they gave me a chance to come back and be a major league pitcher again. I'm grateful to them and I wish them the best. I hope that this trade helps them in the future."

The 22-year-old Knebel had a 6.23 ERA in eight relief appearances for the Tigers this season. The Rangers said he will be optioned to Triple-A Round Rock, and Thompson will be assigned to Double-A Frisco.

Knebel was 4-1 with a 1.62 ERA and three saves in 25 combined relief outings with Double-A Erie and Triple-A Toledo this season. The right-hander was drafted 39th overall by the Tigers out of the University of Texas in 2013 and has averaged 11.8 strikeouts per nine innings in 56 minor league games.

The 20-year-old Thompson is 7-4 with a 3.06 ERA combined in 16 starts for Class-A Lakeland and two with Double-A Erie this season. The right-hander was selected out of a Texas high school in the second round of the 2012 draft and has 208 strikeouts in 205 1/3 major league innings.

Both pitchers were signed by Tigers scout Tim Grieve, son of former Rangers player, general manager and current broadcaster Tom Grieve.



KATHY WILLEMS/AP

Rangers catcher Robinson Chirinos, left, congratulates relief pitcher Joakim Soria after Soria closed out the Rangers' 4-2 victory over the Yankees on Monday. Soria was traded to the Tigers on Wednesday.

SPORTS



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Detroit Tigers relief pitcher
Joba Chamberlain

CARLOS OSORIO/AP

MLB

Letting his hair down

Chamberlain
finds comfort
zone with more
relaxed Tigers

By LARRY LAGE
The Associated Press

DETROIT — The Detroit Tigers have gotten a good return on their short-term investment in right-hander Joba Chamberlain.

"He's been the one piece that has been consistent all year," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said.

Chamberlain started the week atop the American League in holds heading into Detroit's road trips against the Arizona Diamondbacks and Los Angeles Angels.

He pitched the eighth — the inning that has become his to pitch — in Sunday's sweep-avoiding win for the AL Central-leading Tigers against Cleveland. He held opponents scoreless for the 13th time in 14 games.

On Wednesday, Chamberlain entered in the seventh inning against the Diamondbacks, throwing one pitch to get his team out of a jam. He has not allowed a run in 27 of his last 29 outings and has a 1.33 ERA in that span.

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